THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL

WILLIAM J. FOXELL

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THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL

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To

MY THREE SONS

Two of Whom Have Served Overseas

as Soldiers in the Great War

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FOREWORD

These Studies have been prepared at the request of the Commission on Bible Study and Other Christian Education Books of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, and the work connected with them has been done in general cooperation with that Commission. They are intended both for use in Bible study classes of adults and young people in Christian Associations and churches, and for personal study. The request was for a book which would form an introduction to the study of the Old Testament and give a guide to a general survey of the material.

In the individual Studies are given most of the significant portions of the Scripture to be considered. It is well, however, for the student always to have at hand his open Bible, that the context may be easily studied.

Passages to be *read* will be frequently indicated, though not quoted. A story is told of an Association Secretary overseas, who stood in his hut, helping the Tommies who were leaving for the trenches. It was midnight. A young boy made his way nervously to the counter. "Want something, lad?" "Yes, sir. I have a Bible, and I don't know much about it. I'd like you to mark some passages in it. I am going to the trenches tonight." While the Secretary was marking this boy's book, half a dozen others came up, and said, "Mark mine, too, sir." If one will study the passages quoted and indicated, he will have "marked" many of the most precious words in the Old Testament.

The Studies have been arranged to cover the daily readings of half a year. But it is hoped that this scheme may be a guide and not a chain. Often it will be wise for a student or a class to spend a good deal of time upon a single Study, irrespective of the arrangement of the text.

In the course of the following Studies, the writer tries to acknowledge his obligations to the authors who have helped him, but one realizes that there are many creditors unknown or forgotten. He is deeply indebted to his teachers and his colleagues who have combined painstaking, accurate scholarship with pure and aggressive Christianity. His best and dearest instructors have been the thousand Freshmen who in the past eleven years have been his fellow-students in his curriculum Bible classes. Especial gratitude is due Mr. Harrison S. Elliott for his invaluable preliminary outline of the Studies, and for his persistent, enlightened interest in their preparation.

A FEW REFERENCE BOOKS

Abbreviations of Titles

Ex. Bi.	"Expositor's Bible" (volumes dealing with Twelve Prophets, very helpful).
H. B. D.	Hastings, "Bible Dictionary" (serviceable, now to be obtained in a one-volume edition).
His. Bi.	Kent, "Historical Bible" (four small volumes, delightfully written, well worth owning).
Int. Com.	International Critical Commentary (scholarly, rather than popular, important for discussion of difficult passages).
S. O. T.	Kent, "Student's Old Testament" (valuable for careful study).

Other worth-while books will be mentioned in the course of the Studies.

Introductory Study

Our interest in the following Studies is not scholastic. It is the interest, rather, of the member of the Association Bible class, or of the student in "Curriculum Freshman Bible," or of the pastor-preacher. We would find and share "the pile of good thoughts" with which the Old Testament has been ever enriching the life of the world. Questions of criticism will be subordinated. Almost every verse of the books studied has been the battlefield of scholarship. We shall spend little time in wandering among the craters and trenches torn by the shells of the critics. Happily our purpose permits us to garner wheat and to gather flowers where other men have fought.

A friend was telling of a preacher whom he asked, "What are you reading nowadays?" "The Bible." "Oh, I thought you finished that in the Seminary." "Well," said the preacher, "I am reading it a second time." It is hoped that our study will not be a substitute for Bible reading, but a spur to that "second reading" which is sure to mean far more than the first.

After all:

I. WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

We may frankly admit that the Old Testament calls forth a somewhat different interest from that aroused by the New. A man may scarcely be a free-hearted citizen of the Western world without knowing something of Jesus. In many non-Christian lands, the missionaries have been unable for years to give the Old Testament to their people.

But a student never comes upon a mighty stream without wishing to trace it to its source. Beginnings are always important. In religion they are of unique importance. One is

reminded of the word of a man to Justice Holmes of the Supreme Court: "There is only one interesting thing in the world, and that is religion." When we are all through talking about football, politics, war itself, religion remains the permanently, fundamentally interesting thing in the world. The Old Testament is the chief source-book of the religion of the Jew and of the Moslem; and with the New Testament, the chief source-book of Christianity. One cannot read the New Testament intelligently without some knowledge of the Old. The Old Testament was the Bible of John the Baptist, and from its pages he received the warrant for his mission; and in the atmosphere of its prophecies he lived. The Old Testament was the Bible of St. Peter; from one of its well-known prophecies he wrought his apologetic at Pentecost. One may never forget that the Old Testament was the Bible of St. Paul; that its laws, which sometimes seem to us dead and mummified, he regarded as a living guide, leading men to the school of Christ. Above all, one may never forget that the Old Testament was the Bible of our Lord. "That book which was used by the Redeemer himself for the sustenance of his own soul can never pass out of the use of the redeemed." From the words of the Old Testament the Master welded the sword with which he foiled the Tempter. The manifesto of his new religion (Luke 4: 18, 19) was his re-reading, with a new emphasis, of an Old Testament prophecy.

The man who has no "religious" interest in the Old Testament would still be constrained to study it, if he chanced to lay any claim to an intelligent understanding of the world's *art* and *literature*. The painters and sculptors of many Christian centuries have dedicated their genius to the portrayal of persons and scenes of the Old as well as of the New Testament.

Professor Phelps of Yale has said: "If I were appointed a committee of one to regulate the much-debated question of college entrance examinations in English, I should erase every list of books which has been thus far suggested, and

I should confine the examinations wholly to the authorized version of the Bible. The Bible has within its pages every kind of literature that any proposed list of English classics contains. . . . Priests, atheists, skeptics, devotees, agnostics, and evangelists are all agreed that the Bible is the best example of English composition that the world has ever seen. It contains the noblest prose and poetry with the utmost simplicity of diction." The words quoted refer as truly to the Old as to the New Testament.

Again, if we had no "religious" interest in the Old Testament, we should still be constrained, as students of the world's *social* and *political progress,* to familiarize ourselves with its narrative.

The Jew of Babylon or of Brooklyn, the Jew of the Dispersion or of Zionism, the Jew of the Ghetto or of the Lord Mayor's mansion can be understood only by the student of the Old Testament.

The life of the German nation in its greatest days has been knit up inextricably with Luther's translation of the Bible.

In England, led by the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular, "the whole nation became a church."

"The common Bible necessitated the common school. In the colonies of New England, the enormous interest in public education was due largely to the desire to read and understand the Bible; and the influence of the Old Testament is more clearly seen than that of the New Testament in the early legislation of the colonies." The Old Testament has been the poor man's friend, the handbook of democracy. Indeed, it has been noted that in the conflict of the people with the crown, the kings enforced their claims by quotations from the New Testament, while the people quoted as authoritative the Old Testament Law and Prophets.

Students, then, of art and literature, of political and social progress, cannot afford to be ignorant of the Old Testament. But our main concern in these studies is that we may become more intelligent students of our religion, and share with her great teachers their best visions.

II. WHAT IS THE ANCESTRY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ON YOUR DESK?

Your Bible is, (or should be, for careful study), the American Standard Revised Version, bearing the date 1901. This date speaks of the time when the American Committee of Revisers were permitted to insert in the text itself, rather than in the appendix, the revisions which they preferred to the readings of the English Committee. Who, then, were the English Committee? They were a group of the foremost biblical scholars of England, who were chosen as early as 1870, and who worked with the American Committee on the New Testament till 1881, on the Old Testament till 1884, to revise the so-called Authorized Version.

This Authorized or King James Version had been in general use since the date of its original publication, 1611. Its revision had become imperative. Most important manuscripts of the New Testament had been discovered, not accessible to the translators of the Authorized Version. Many words and phrases in both Testaments had become obsolete, others needed revision in the interest of accuracy. Changes in grammatical construction and in paragraphing were highly desirable. But the Authorized Version, with its sonorous, lofty, and beautiful English, with its innumerable associations with the deepest experiences of English and American life, is still deservedly loved and cherished in our homes and our churches.

This Authorized Version itself was based upon the Bishops' Bible of 1568, corrected by the careful consideration of available Hebrew and Greek texts.

Behind the Old Testament of the Bishops' Bible we have the Massoretic Hebrew text. The Massoretes were a guild of Jewish scholars, who did their work between the fifth and eighth centuries of our era. They aimed to preserve, not alone the proper text, but the customary pronunciation of the ancient Hebrew scriptures. For this purpose they introduced vowel points and accents into the texts, which previously had indicated simply the consonants of words. The Massoretes them-

selves worked upon a text which had become practically fixed by the beginning of the second century. By this early date the theory had developed that the text of the Old Testament manuscripts was divinely authorized and must not be altered. It is of thrilling interest that the Hebrew text from which our most recent translations have been made has suffered comparatively little change during the past eighteen hundred years.

As we trace still further the pedigree of your Old Testament, we meet with the work of the famous Council of Jamnia, held at some time between 90 and 100 A. D. At this Council, Jewish scholars agreed upon the books which should be regarded as canonical, divinely authorized, and inspired. In their final list they included:

1. *The Books of the Law:* the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Bible. These had been counted sacred and unalterable probably ever since 397 B. C.

2. *The Former Prophets:* Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. These books, as well, had been for centuries treated with peculiar reverence.

3. *The Latter Prophets:* Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the "Twelve" or Minor Prophets, which certainly by the second century B. C. had come to be regarded as divinely authorized.

4. *The Hagiographa,* or Sacred Writings. These included:
   a. The Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job.
   b. The Rolls: Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther.
   c. The Remaining Books: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

These sacred writings had not long been regarded as superlatively holy and unalterable. At the Council of Jamnia itself, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon had a hard fight for admission to the Canon.

At some time between 284 and 200 B. C., the Law and the Prophets (groups 1, 2, 3) had been translated from the Hebrew into the Greek. By the beginning of the Christian era, all of the Old Testament had been so translated. This Greek Version, called the Septuagint, differs at some points

from our present Hebrew text, and is helpful to scholars who are seeking the readings of the earliest manuscripts.[1]

As we try to trace the pedigrees of the individual books, we frequently discover in a given book evidences of various authorship.

We must always keep in mind the Oriental method of book-making. One man would write his message, make his contribution. Another writer, living perhaps at a much later time, would add his own contribution to the older material, without giving any indication of change of authorship. Sometimes a document has undergone many editorial changes. Sometimes a compiler has woven together two or more documents to form a continuous narrative; again he has loosely attached one document to another. Writings of the same general type were sometimes sheltered under the name of some great king, prophet, or lawgiver. Thus the book of Proverbs was given the name of Solomon, although the book itself declares that many of the proverbs were attributed to other authors, and gathered by other men. The psalms of many centuries are fittingly called by the name of David, the sweet singer of Israel. Today we may give to a collection of hymns of the ages the title, "The Songs of David." Jastrow remarks: "Authorship in fact counted for little in the ancient Orient. It was the utterance or the statement or the compilation that was regarded as the essence, and it is not until we come to an advanced literary period that the question of authorship was a matter of any concern. We have no specific word for author in ancient Hebrew, but merely a term ordinarily rendered as 'scribe,' which may be used indifferently for a secretary who writes at dictation, for one who copies or compiles what another has composed, as well as for the one who indites an original composition."[2]

An interesting and important illustration of the foregoing

[1] "The oldest dated Hebrew manuscript is 916 A.D., and most of the manuscripts used by the translators of the Septuagint must have been at least 1100 years older."

[2] Morris Jastrow, "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," p. 285—a valuable and readable book.

paragraph is given us in the first six books of the Bible, commonly called the Hexateuch (from the two Greek words, meaning six, and tool, or book). These books are the final compilation of documents of several different periods.

1. The earliest document is commonly called the Judean, or Jahvistic document. It consists for the most part of narratives and laws which probably had been handed down from century to century, and were finally gathered by prophetic writers living in the latter part of the ninth century, "under the shadow of Solomon's temple."

The following characteristics of this document have been noted:

a. The customary use of Yahweh[3] as title for Israel's deity.

b. A picturesque and vivid literary style.

c. A primitive spirit and coloring of narrative.

2. The second document is styled Ephraimitic (or Elohistic), because it consists of narrative and laws apparently cherished and preserved by the prophetic schools of northern Israel, Ephraim. The document is usually dated about fifty years later than the Judean. We may note:

a. That the document uses commonly the word Elohim, God, as the title of Israel's deity.

b. That it begins, not with the creation, but with the story of Abraham, and reveals an exclusive interest in Israel's own social and religious life.

c. That the narratives of this document are less picturesque, more subjective than those of the earlier document. For example, God does not now appear in visible form, walking and talking with men in the

[3] The name of Israel's deity, written without vowels, was YHWH, and was probably pronounced Yahwê. But there was "a disposition to avoid names too sacred for common use," and the word Adonai, or Lord, came to be used instead of the sacred name. In comparatively recent times the vowels of the word Adonai were employed in vocalizing the mysterious and sacred name, so that we get the modern form, Jehovah. This form is used in the Revised Version, in our hymnology, and in common speech, and is accordingly used throughout this book, instead of the more correct form, Yahweh, or Jahveh.

daytime. Rather he appears in visions of the night, or sends his message by an angelic emissary.

d. That the narratives are inclined to dwell upon the pathetic aspects of the patriarchal life, and to refine the occasionally crude morality of the stories told of the patriarchs by the Judean document.

3. The third document is called the Deuteronomic. Found, apparently, in the temple at Jerusalem in 621 B. C., its main purpose was to make Jerusalem the sole center of the people's worship. It insists upon the destruction of the village shrines and dwells upon the unique rights of the Jerusalem priesthood. Many ancient laws are embedded in the document, and the authors who sought a compromise between the ideals of the prophets and of the priests regarded the book as essentially the utterance of the great prophet and lawgiver of Israel, Moses, in whose name they wrote.

4. At some time between the eighth and the sixth centuries, the Judean and Ephraimitic documents were welded into one continuous narrative. During and after the Exile, priestly writers seem to have worked over the old material, fashioned a framework for it, and added some new material; so that many scholars identify a fourth, or priestly, document. It has been noted:

a. That this priestly document divides the history of the world into four periods, each period beginning with a divine revelation.

b. That it emphasizes genealogies, reveals a keen interest in the origin of religious institutions, and shows a preference for the formal and the studied, rather than the natural and spontaneous style of speech.

There is still much difference of opinion as to the precise identification of each portion of these documents; but their fairly successful disentanglement is of immense service to the student who might otherwise be disturbed by discrepancies and by duplications of narratives and of laws.

The evidences of compilation and of editorial changes so well illustrated in the Hexateuch we observe in most of the

other books of the Old Testament. There were "Bibles before the Bible."

Your Old Testament, then, traces its ancestry back to earlier English versions, back to documents written in Hebrew or Aramaic, documents written at various times during many centuries, written to preserve and make widely serviceable the laws, the history, the deep experiences, and the lofty ideals of prophet hearts and a prophet race.

Concluding Note

It may be well to guard one's thought with reference to a phrase which to the minds of many has come to bear a somewhat sinister meaning. "Biblical criticism" does not suggest a hostile attitude toward the Bible. An art critic is the most appreciative student of the great pictures and the great artists. A critic of literature is the man most certain to speak in rapt admiration of Shakespeare and Wordsworth. "Biblical criticism" is simply one or another kind of careful consideration of the books which make up the divine library of the Bible.

There are two main types of criticism: textual or lower criticism; literary and historical, or higher criticism. The textual critic concerns himself with the various texts of the documents, tries to ascertain the original text and its meaning. The literary and historical (higher) critic seeks to determine "the scope, purpose and character of the various books, the times in which and the conditions under which they were written, the authorship," and the value of the literature as "evidence for the history of Israel and the life and thought of the time discussed." All biblical students must work in both fields of criticism.

Let us suppose that the original Declaration of Independence had been lost forever, and that the names of the original signers had disappeared; but that various manuscript copies and copies of copies had come down to us. The textual critic of today would gather all available copies, try to determine which copies resembled most closely the original text, what

was the meaning of each word and phrase not now in current use. The "higher" critic would consider the probable authorship of the Declaration, the conditions under which it was written, the purpose expressed by it, and the value of the document as revealing the actual life, thought, and relationships of the American people at the assumed time of writing.

We need only to remind ourselves that there is a radical distinction between negative, destructive, irreverent criticism, and the positive, constructive, reverent criticism which makes the finest scholarship the servant of the noblest religion. The Bible fears no honest investigation; it rather bids every earnest seeker, "Come and see." Biblical criticism has raised the patriarchs and the prophets from their tombs, and made them live again in the midst of their contemporary civilization, with its armies, its idols, its politics. Biblical criticism has transformed the Bible from a book of endless puzzles, enigmas, elusive mysteries, into a book of living messages for their own times, and for men living now upon the earth.

III. HISTORICAL CHART

Based mainly upon charts in Kent's "Historical Bible."

I. THE PATRIARCHS

Chapter II. "Early Heroes of the Hebrew Race and Faith."

II. THE OPPRESSION AND THE EXODUS

Chapter III. "Freedom and the Foundations of National Life and Faith."

The Work of Moses in Egypt and the Wilderness.
(Ramses II and Merneptah IV 1292-1215 B. C.*)

III. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Chapter IV. "Conquest and Chaos."

The Period of Joshua and the Judges.

IV. THE UNITED KINGDOM

Chapter V. "Nationalization of Politics and Faith."

Reigns of **Saul, David, Solomon** 1050-937 B. C.

V. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1. The Division of the Kingdom

Chapter VI. "Prosperity, Despotism, and Disintegration."

NORTHERN KINGDOM (Israel)	SOUTHERN KINGDOM (Judah)
Jeroboam I. **937-915** B. C.	**Rehoboam** 937-920 B. C.

2. Conflicts and Alliances with Foreign Nations

Chapter VII. "Conflicts and Alliances with Foreign Nations and with Foreign Gods."

NORTHERN KINGDOM (Israel)	SOUTHERN KINGDOM (Judah)
Nadab	
Baasha	Abijah
Elah	Asa 917-876 B. C.
Omri	**Jehoshaphat** 876-851 B. C.
Ahab 875-863 B. C.	
*(Battle of Karkar, 854 B. C.)	
**Elijah, Micaiah.*	
Ahaziah	Jehoram
Jehoram	Ahaziah
Jehu 842-814 B. C.	
(Pays tribute to Assyria, 842 B. C.)	Athaliah
Elisha.	Joash
Jehoahaz	Amaziah

3. Eighth Century Problems and Prophets

Chapter VIII. "Old Problems and New Prophets."

NORTHERN KINGDOM (Israel)	SOUTHERN KINGDOM (Judah)
Jeroboam II. 781-740 B. C.	**Azariah** (Uzziah) **782-737** B. C.

*Important rulers and dates are printed in heavy type; especially significant events in any reign enclosed in parentheses; names of prophets or of books for any period printed in italics.

Amos c. 750 B. C.

Jotham, regent and king 751-735 B. C.
Isaiah 740-686 (?) B. C.

Zechariah
Shallum
Menahem
Pekahiah
Hosea c. 740-722 B. C.

Ahaz 735-720 (?) B. C.

Hoshea
(Fall of Samaria to Sargon II **722-721** B. C.)

Hezekiah 720-686 (?) B. C.
(Sennacherib's Invasion 701 B. C.)
Micah 701 B. C.

VI. THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

1. The Great Reformation

Chapter IX. "Politics and Prophecy in the Days of Judah's Decline and Fall."

Manasseh 686-641 B. C.
Amon
Josiah 639-608 B. C.
(Scythian Invasion 626 B. C.)
Zephaniah 626 B. C.
Jeremiah 626-580 (?) B. C.
(Great Reformation 621 B. C.)
Nahum 608 B. C.

Jehoahaz
Jehoiakim
(Fall of Nineveh, end of Assyria **608-7** B. C.)
(Battle of Carchemish 605-4 B. C.)
Habakkuk **604** B. C.

2. The Babylonian Period 604-538 B. C.

Chapter X. "Exilic Hopes and Emphases."

Jehoiachin
(First Exile 597 B. C.)
Ezekiel 597-572 (?) B. C.

Zedekiah
(Destruction of Jerusalem and Final Exile **586** B. C.)

Obadiah 586 (?) B. C.
Book of Lamentations 586-500 (?) B. C.
Prophet of Exile 539 (?) B. C.
(Conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus 538 B. C.)

3. The Persian Period 538-332 B. C.

Chapter XI. "Currents and Cross-Currents of Thought in the Persian Period."

(The Second Temple 520-515 B. C.)
Haggai 520 B. C.
Zechariah 520-515 B. C.
Malachi 460 (?) B. C.
Nehemiah 445-432 B. C.
Book of The Psalms
Ezra 432-397 (?) B. C.
Books of Job, Ruth, Jonah 400-350 (?) B. C.
Joel 400-333 (?) B. C.
(Establishment of Priestly Law 397 (?) B. C.)

4. The Greek Period 332-168 B. C.

Chapter XII. "Voices of Judaism in the Greek Period."

Book of Ecclesiastes c. 300 B. C.
Books of Chronicles c. 250 B. C.
Book of Song of Solomon 350-250 (?) B. C.
Book of Proverbs c. 250 B. C
Book of Esther c. 200 B. C.
(Antiochus Epiphanes 175-164 B. C.)

5. The Maccabean and Hasmonean Periods 168-38 B. C.

Chapter XIII. "The Daybreak Calls."

A Glance at the Chart

As we are most familiar with the times of Jesus, let us notice first that in the days of our Master's earthly ministry Rome was mistress of Palestine, as of the world. Before the day of Roman control, we trace the story of the Macca-

bees and Hasmoneans, members of the family which won the independence of their nation but fell from their high estate through mutual jealousies and foreign tyrants.

Working backward from the Maccabean Period, we find ourselves in the Greek Period, beginning with the days of Alexander the Great. During this fateful time, Palestine was the football of the politics of Alexander's heirs and their successors.

Pressing back still further, we are in the Persian Period, beginning 538 B. C., a period which witnessed the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, which witnessed as well the transformation of the religion of the Hebrews into the Jewish religion: a period of ghastly cruelties, bitter disillusionments, superb adventures of faith.

We work our way back into the Babylonian Period, the brief but momentous years between 586 and 538 B. C., years which saw the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile of Judeans in Babylon, the work of exilic prophets and priests who kept alive the soul of Israel, yet forged for that soul new chains.

Back again we journey into the period of the Divided Kingdom. This period began with the most foolish decision of the foolish king Rehoboam to load with heavier burdens the tribes of Israel. At this time the northern tribes engaged in "a conservative revolution," which tore them away forever from Judah and Jerusalem. For two centuries this Northern Kingdom ran its course to the ruin which befell in 722 B. C. The Southern Kingdom, with the capital city, with the ancient temple, went its way for a century and a half longer until its life was blasted by the folly of its rulers and the fury of its foes, 586 B. C.

Pressing back into Israel's remoter days, we come to the period of the United Kingdom, beginning with the reign of Saul, and continuing down through the days of glory and decline under David and Solomon.

There are records which enable us to reconstruct in a general way the life of a still earlier period, that of the Conquest and the Judges. It was a period of slow tribal unifica-

tion under the pressure of hostile neighbors and of increasing devotion to the common deity of all the clans, Jehovah.

As we seek to explore earlier ages, we come to an era which begins with the wandering of the family of Abraham, continues through the centuries of Egyptian bondage, through the years in the Wilderness down to the Conquest.

In the first books of the Bible we can catch glimpses of remoter times, and note traces of their life and thought.

Let us now make sure that we have in mind the most significant dates of the history of the Hebrews. All of us have felt a certain satisfaction in tying great facts to dates like 1492, 1776, 1861. With very little difficulty we can bind together the supreme facts and dates of Israelitish history, and win a mastery of the great story. Most of the dates are approximate, but will serve our purpose.

Consulting the dates emphasized upon the chart, we note the probable century of the Oppression and the Exodus. We pass down the years to mark the culmination of the monarchy in the reign of Solomon. One of the portentous dates of history is that of the division of the Kingdom. The Battle of Karkar stands out as a vivid suggestion of the growing international complications of Israel's politics. The date helps us, too, to remember the conflict waged between king and prophet, Baalism and Jehovah worship. The Fall of Samaria means the end of the Northern Kingdom. The dates of the two great writing prophets of northern Israel may be easily remembered in connection with this tragedy. Isaiah of the Southern Kingdom was probably a younger contemporary of Hosea. Twenty years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, Sennacherib advanced upon Jerusalem. One hundred years after the fall of Samaria, we come to a great date in Judah's history, the Reformation of Josiah. This was speedily followed by the events of 608 and 604 which shook the Semitic world to its center. The dates of the first Exile, the destruction of Jerusalem, of the final Exile and the Return, of the restoration of the temple, and the rebuilding of the walls of the city under Nehemiah—these are easily

borne in mind. The approximate dates of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Maccabean periods should be remembered. Close the book, and see if you cannot repeat the dates in heavy type and the events belonging to them. The drill will save much confusion of thought, and make far more interesting the great drama.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. "What's the use of studying the Old Testament?"

2. If you were trying to comfort an aged woman, would you read from the Authorized or the Revised Version? If you were teaching a Bible class, which version would you use and why?

3. Why do you suppose the common people, in their struggles with their kings, challenged the royal authority with words from the Old Testament rather than the New?

4. Discuss Oriental bookmaking and authorship. How would you explain the fact that the earlier writers of Scripture had no "pride of authorship"?

5. What is the difference between the "lower" and the "higher" criticism?

6. What events and persons can you "think together" with the following dates: 937, 854, 621, 608, 597, 586, 332, 63 B. C.?

CHAPTER I

Old Stories of the Elder World and Early Answers to Early Questions

Introductory

We are told that in the Age of Pericles the Athenian boys "learned by heart many passages from the old poets, and here and there a boy with a good memory could repeat the entire Iliad and Odyssey." It is easy to see how Homer must have laid his hand upon every Athenian youth, shaping his thought and conduct. What the stories of Homer meant to Athens, that and more the stories of Genesis meant to the Hebrew people. While the Genesis narrative did not reach final literary form for centuries, its messages were familiar to every Hebrew child, and helped to fashion his conceptions of God, of the world, of his own proper attitude toward God and man.

It is our present task to study the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The stories of the Creation, of the Fall, of Cain and Abel, of the Flood and the Tower of Babel, do not help the mother of today to answer quite as many child questions as they did the Hebrew mother. But they still bring to us, in their picture language, truths which we forget only when we forget ourselves.

I. THE CREATION

First Week, First Day.

1. The Narrative

Read all of Gen. 1, noting dignity of style and loftiness of conception.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. . . .

And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.—Gen. 1: 1-8, *27, 28.*

With stately rhetoric the writer retells the ancient story of creation. The preacher of today uses the best science of our time as the vehicle of his religious ideas; our author with like purpose used the best science of his day. His thought seems to be this: "In the beginning," the undivided waters enveloped the chaotic, formless earth. As the darkness steals across the world at the evening time, so the light quietly spread abroad. Then a solid, "beaten out" vault or dome separated the heavenly waters from the great deeps about and beneath the earth. On the third day the abyss of waters retired, the dry land arose, and vegetation began. On the fourth day appeared the heavenly luminaries, which seem to have been regarded as receptacles of the light, that they might divide the day from the night and serve "for signs and for seasons and for years." The fifth day saw the appearance of the lower forms of life, such as swarm in air and water. On the sixth

day appeared the land animals, and finally man himself, created "in the image of God."

2. The Message

The story offers rich and permanent values to the religious man. For example:

The conception of *God* is true to our noblest thinking. Consider that first dramatic phrase: "In the beginning God." Can we go further back? Whatever be our conception of creation, must we not go back so far?

"In the beginning? Slowly grope we back
Along the narrowing track,
Back to the deserts of the world's pale prime—
The mire, the clay, the slime.
And then—what then? Surely to something less,
Back—back to nothingness.

You dare not halt upon that dwindling way!
There is no gulf to stay
Your footsteps to the last. Go back you must!
Far, far below the dust
Descend, descend! Grade by dissolving grade
We follow unafraid.
Dissolve, dissolve this moving world of men
Into thin air—and then?"

Is it out of "thin air," that by merest "chance" there have been woven "pageants of praise and prayer"? When we have seen the great hills—one of them "named Olivet"; when we have seen "one child clasp hands and pray"; when we have seen

"emerge from that dark mire
One martyr ringed with fire;
Or from that nothingness by special grace
One woman's love-lit face,"[1] . . .

must we not say that we found on that dark road into the "blank abysmal night"

"In the beginning—God"?

To us the phrase seems trite enough. That first phrase,

[1]Alfred Noyes, "The Origin of Life."

"In the beginning God," started the young man, Joseph Neesima, upon his long journey from the worship of the gods of old Japan to monotheism, to Christianity, to his eminent service as founder of the Doshisha University.

That is a striking sentence: "He made the stars also," as if God had flung them out into the darkness, a divine afterthought. At the Yerkes Observatory, one is shown a photographic plate of a portion of the Milky Way. Upon the plate may be seen two little pin-points of light, a thread-like space of darkness between. Each of those points is a world larger than our sun, and the thread-like space of darkness is millions of miles wide. Ours is a greater universe than that of the writer, our guesses at the divine methods are more accurate; but have we a better word to describe the facts than this, *"He* made the stars also"?

The author's conception of *the order and progress of creation* is suggestive. There is a vast difference between "inchoateness and chaos." The last word of science is not out of harmony with the ancient thought that there has been an orderly progress from primeval inchoateness toward a cosmos, fair, ordered, beautiful.

Note the author's thought of *man.* "In the image of God created he him." When in the earth-born mortal there sprang up the beginnings of self-consciousness, reason, love, the power of choice, then there arose within him the very elements of the Godhead. Chesterton remarks: "Elephants do not build colossal temples of ivory, even in a rococo style; camels do not paint even bad pictures, though equipped with the material of many camel-hair brushes." Man alone of the animals can become a conscious "coworker with an eternal creative good will."

"Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe."

The writer's view was necessarily earth-centered (geocentric). "When Copernicus deciphered the mystery of the heaven, the movement of the earth around the sun, he did not win the assent of Luther. The great reformer, critical as he was, felt bound in this question by the authority of the Bible, and called Copernicus a fool." Luther was needlessly anxious. Unless men are to be found on other planets, the true religious view of the universe still sees this tiny earth the center, since men are here; and if there be men on other spheres, those spheres, which are but dirt or metal, gain significance only because men are there. A baby in its cradle is of more worth than a constellation of stars, than all the rest of the material universe. "In the image of God created he him."

First Week, Second Day.

3. The Babylonian Myth

In 1875, George Smith announced his discovery, in the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, of the Babylonian poem of Creation. It is believed that this poem was known certainly as early as 2000 B.C., at least seven hundred years before Moses, and at least fourteen hundred years before the Hebrew story took its final form in Gen. 1. Comparison between that poem and our narrative reveals striking resemblances. But the contrasts are equally remarkable. In the more ancient epic, we have gross polytheism and materialism. In Genesis we have pure monotheism and spirituality. God's spirit broods upon the face of the waters. God's will becomes effective through a word. Set over against the scriptural account of the creation of our world this story of the conflict between the god of the spring sun and the monster of the deep:

"Then Tiamat and Marduk, the leaders of the gods, stood up,
They advanced to the fray, drew near to the fight.
The lord spread out his net and caught her,
The evil wind behind him he let loose in her face. . . .

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He bound her and cut off her life.
He cast down her carcass, and stood upon it."

Or contrast with the Genesis narrative this story of man's creation. Marduk speaks:

"My blood will I take, and bone . . .
I will set up man, that man . . .
I will create man to inhabit (the earth),
To establish the service of the gods, that shrines (may be built.)"[2]

Not directly, but through a long process of transformation and transfiguration, did our Creation narrative come from Babylonish sources. "Our story," says Ryle, "appears in the form in which it was received at the hands of devout Israelites moved by the spirit of God, and penetrated with the pure belief in the spiritual Jehovah. . . . The popular tradition was not abolished, it was preserved, purified, hallowed, that it might subserve the divine purpose of transmitting as in a figure to future generations spiritual teachings upon eternal truths."

4. A Second Story of Beginnings

Read Gen. 2: 4-25, noting the early answers to the curious questionings of childhood and child people.

> And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground; but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the

[2] S.O.T., I, pp. 360–369. H.B.D. Extra Vol., p. 571ff.

tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.—Gen. 2: 5-9.

The second chapter of Genesis gives us a second story of creation. Here we have a different picture of the creative act, a different order of creation, a different conception of God and of man. No longer does God's spirit brood upon the face of the waters. No longer does God *speak* the universe into being. Jehovah is the artificer, the landlord. Man is a gardener, tilling God's park. We have here the kind of story which would grow up among a people who had known the rainless desert and the agricultural life, a people who would seek to explain the origins and curious facts of life. How did the world begin? How shall we account for the relative dependence of woman, and the sense of responsibility for her protection felt by man? How shall we account for the resemblances and differences between the sexes? What is the origin of marriage? How did the animals get their names? Not of great religious value, the story is of intense interest as suggesting some early answers to the questions of the childhood of the race. For hundreds of years Hebrew mothers doubtless told that story to wide-eyed little children in the tent or on the housetop.

II. THE FALL

First Week, Third Day.

Read Gen. 3 to examine in detail this "pearl of Genesis."

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And

they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.

And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.—Gen. 3:4-13.

The story of Gen. 3 has been well called "the pearl of Genesis." Note the actors in the drama: (1 and 2) The man and the woman, both innocent, ignorant, untested. (3) The serpent, always and everywhere the object of loathing, yet fascination. (4) Jehovah, represented as walking in the garden in the cool of the day, apparently in the habit of talking familiarly with the man whom he has made.

As we turn to the action, note that the serpent tempts the woman; she eats, gives to her husband; he eats; the innocence of both is gone; God sees and knows. As we study the denouement, we see that first the serpent is punished, then the woman, finally the man. We may not pause upon the exquisite literary form of the story. We may well study the vivid picture of sin's entrance into the world, its operation in the world, and its issues in the life of the world.

1. Could there be a better picture of temptation than that of the serpent, slimy, ugly, yet compelling? "It can outclimb the monkey, outswim the fish, outleap the zebra, outwrestle the athlete and crush the tiger. The serpent finds its way everywhere, over every fence, or barrier, into every crevice or recess." Note the subtle appeal to the physical appetite, to the esthetic sense, to the intellect. Truly this apple was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and a "recipe" for the winning of wisdom. Temptation delights in dis-

guises. "Why will a man insist on being tied to his mother's apron strings? Let him go out and learn something, see the world, taste the sweets of life, and see the things which are beautiful." Could the essence of sin be better portrayed? For what is the essence of sin? Disobedience to the known will of God. Back of the sin itself lies a doubt of God's word. Significantly does the tempter say: "Ye shall not surely die."

2. Mark, too, the operation of sin in the world.

a. See how the sinner searches for comradeship. Eve must find her husband, that he may share her experience. One college man could not be persuaded to steal a spoon. A hundred collegians, after an athletic victory, have been known to enter a railroad restaurant, wreck it, and carry home spoons as trophies. Seldom does a man go to the devil alone.

b. See how the sinner seeks to shift responsibility. The man blames the woman, and finally throws the onus of the sin upon God himself: "The woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman in turn shifts the responsibility upon the serpent, who has ever since been loaded with our coward sins. How often have we heard men say, "The temptation was too much for me; no man could stand it."

3. Note the issues of sin: the shame, the sense of guilt, the fear. The man now hides himself from God who has been his friend. In "Pippa Passes." Ottima says to her companion in guilt:

"Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned through the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,
As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me: then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead."

The friend of God is not afraid of God's lightning or thunder. He revels in the storm.

First Week, Fourth Day.

> And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.—Gen. 3: 14-21.

With more caution must we speak of the physical issues of sin, as pictured by the writer. The writhing movement of the serpent, the thorns, the toil, the pain, the death—would these things have been, if sin had not been? Yes, so far as we can see. The wriggling of the serpent is no more an evidence of God's curse than is the leaping of the kangaroo an evidence of God's favor. Thorns and thistles have probably as ancient a lineage as wheat and corn. But this is certain: sin meets "the abhorrence of nature." It has been said that Palestine looks like a country which had been stoned for its sins (or rather for the sins of the Turk). A man receives a farm from his father. The new prosperity ruins him; he begins to drink, and soon rain seeps through the roof of his barn, thorns begin to grow in the garden which had delighted to serve him. Sin makes toil drudgery instead

of glad labor in God's garden. Again, if all men and women from the earliest days had lived normal, that is, ideal, lives, there is no question that the pains of childbirth would have been greatly lessened. Still again it is sin which has given death its sting. Where sin is conquered, the grave has lost its victory, and death lifts the gates of the eternal city that the victor may come in.

There is a touching little verse at the close of the story to the effect that God made for the man and the woman tunics of skins. It is as if the writer would say, Grant the hideous results of sin, sin does not irretrievably separate humanity from God. God cares, loves, starts at once his work of saviourhood, not indeed apart from the suffering of the innocent.

The story does not tell "the whole story." In this world of ours there must be the knowledge of good and evil, else we should have no moral world, no character. Toil, irksome toil, has been indeed man's life-preserver. There is a story told of Tubal, son of Cain, to the effect that he clambered over the wall of the Garden of Eden.

"Long in the Garden he lay at rest,
Knowing nor sorrow nor pain.
There storms never threatened nor trouble oppressed;
His wish was law for each beast and bird,
They sprang to obey at his lightest word;
Yet he longed for the world again. . . .
Then he rose from his rest in the Garden's shade,
And he climbed the wall once more;
Back to labor with axe and spade:
And he smiled at the cold of the winter's storm,
And laughed when the summer sun shone warm
With the joy of a conqueror."

Nor does the story answer all questions. The question has often been asked, "Who made the serpent?" Robinson Crusoe's man Friday asked, "Why didn't God kill the devil?" In other words, Why was sin admitted into God's world? We are not helped by the remark that sin does not exist.

Kant says, "A dream which all dream together, and which all must dream, is not a dream but reality." The serpent may fairly represent those lower forces in our nature which, while not wrong in themselves, frequently lure us from our allegiance to God. A missionary once celebrated a Christian service in a heathen temple, and in the hands of the idols about the room, he placed candles to illuminate his Christian service. It is ours to make our old masters serve us. Our moral evolution depends on our whipping the serpent and making him walk on his belly.

From one point of view, the story is seen to be another effort of early man to fight his way through some of the problems of the strange world in which he lived. How did men happen to go wrong? How shall we account for our antipathy to the serpent? Why does the serpent move in a fashion so mysterious to us—indeed incomprehensible to early peoples? Why do we have to work so hard against thorns and weeds to earn our daily food? Why do women suffer so dreadfully in childbirth?—a pathetic question often asked by those who knew no skilled physicians or midwives. Why do we, the offspring of God, live only to die?

In the British Museum there is an ancient Babylonish cylinder on which is pictured the sacred tree; to the left and right of the tree are male and female figures plucking fruit, while behind the woman a serpent twines itself about the tree. Botany knows no tree whose fruit would yield the knowledge of good and evil, nor yet a tree which would bear the fruit of eternal life. A talking serpent is a figure of folklore and literature rather than of zoology. It is probable that the story of the serpent tempter early made its way throughout the Semitic world. There are still traces of the early thought that the deity may become jealous of his creatures: "Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gen. 3:22). But the story, far-traveled, changing frequently its form and features, has become, through the

inspired words of our writer, the friend and teacher of the religious world.

III. THE BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION

Passages from Genesis, Chapters 4-7.

First Week, Fifth Day.

1. The Acceptable Sacrifice; the First Murder

Read Gen. 4: 1-15 for the connection.

> And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it. And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.
>
> And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. —Gen. 4: 2-10.

From the days of the wilderness wanderings down to the Exile itself, the Hebrews were in danger of infection from the gross immoralities of their neighbors, who on defiled altars offered now and again the fruits of the ground. Cain and Abel pictured the persistent conflict between two theories of sacrifice and two ideals of morality. The sympathies of narrator and of listener were from the first held by Abel, the murdered offerer of the more excellent sacrifice. But

the narrative bears its message even to our own day.[3] Among its teachings are these:

a. The spirit of envy is the spirit of murder.

b. The spirit of murder is a brother devil of the spirit of falsehood. The first murderer becomes the first liar.

c. The spirit of murder denies any claims of brotherhood. If a man is asked: "Are you your brother's keeper?" he may with perfect honesty answer: "No, I am not; my brother is his own keeper, for he has in his exclusive keeping his personality, the quintessence of his manhood." He must go on immediately to add, "Yes, I am my brother's keeper, in that I am bound by my brotherhood to throw about him all the influences that shall guard him from evil and guide him to the good." Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is usually prompted by Cain's spirit.

d. A human life is of infinite worth to God. The voice of Abel's blood cries aloud and is heard by the high God himself.

e. The universe is against the man who does wrong. Note how the earth refuses to yield its strength to Cain, refuses to give him resting place. He is driven out, forever driven out, doomed to eternal wandering in the Land of Wandering (Nod). Worst of all, he is driven from the face of Jehovah himself.

f. God's mercy rejoices over judgment. Here again we have that note of loving-kindness which we shall hear ringing ever more clearly as we go on in our studies. Sometimes we talk as if "the brand of Cain" were an element of punishment. In the narrative it is rather a token of God's compassion: "lest any finding him should smite him."

2. Tales of Antediluvians

Passages from Genesis, Chapters 5-7.

We pass Lamech's wild song of blood revenge, precisely

[3] In the story there may be preserved "the reminiscence of some prehistoric incident, in which a pastoral tribe was exterminated by an agricultural tribe."

the kind of song which a Bedouin chieftain sings to his wives today on his return from his raids. The three children of Lamech are the traditional fathers of tent dwellers, musicians, and metal workers. Their story would seek to explain the origins of civilization, forgetful or ignorant of the flood story, which would preclude their descendants from having much opportunity to care for cattle, or to handle harps, or to make spears and swords.

The ten antediluvian patriarchs resemble, in respect to their enormous ages, the ten kings of the Babylonian legend with their yet greater longevity. It is interesting to notice that Enmeduranki or Edoranchos, the seventh primeval king of the Babylonian legend, was called to intercourse with the sun god, and taught by him concerning many secrets of heaven and earth. Enoch, the seventh patriarch—counting Adam—is recorded to have lived three hundred and sixty-five years, after the number of the days of the solar year. "He was not, for God took him." By the Jews of the later times Enoch was regarded as the father and founder of astrology, and the possessor of all knowledge of the secrets of heaven and earth.

The flood story is preceded by a curious bit of folklore which tells of the consorting of members of the lower angelic orders with the daughters of men, their children being the nephilim or giants. There was a time when such stories were the pith and marrow of popular religion. Contrast the conception of God and man behind this story with that suggested by words like these: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15). God led his people by a long path from the dank valleys up the heights which rise ever higher, until at last men stand

"upon the shining table-lands,
To which our God himself is moon and sun."

IV. THE FLOOD

First Week, Sixth Day.

Read, after the study of the day, Gen. Chapters 6, 7, 8, noting evidences of composite authorship, and of advance upon the Babylonish story.

> And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female: of the birds also of the heavens, seven and seven, male and female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground. And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him. . . . And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. . . .
>
> And God remembered Noah, and all the beasts, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.—Gen. 7: 1-5, 17-19; 8: 1-4.

The story of the Deluge is of the utmost interest to the student of religion. And to the religious man, it still makes its appeal, as revealing certain inspired convictions of

> "that grand *Credo* which in prophet-hearts hath burned
> Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned."

We no longer think of a God who uses a phenomenon of the physical world as a club wielded directly to punish sinners. We have learned from Jesus to think of a Father, whose sun shines upon the evil and the good, who makes his rain to fall upon the just and the unjust. From science we have learned to talk glibly of natural law and second causes. But we have need to rehearse the teachings of the ancient story:

1. The universe is on the side of the good will.

2. Sin means punishment, righteousness salvation.

3. Between God and his friends, there is a permanent and blessed relationship. In the story we have this relationship sealed by a covenant. The idea of the covenant is one of the most fruitful religious conceptions. We read that the Greek Iris, goddess of the rainbow, is the sister of the harpies, and Iris descends upon the rainbow to the earth, to inspire men with madness. The Hebrew word for rainbow is the word originally used of the bow of the warrior. But the Hebrew seer does not think of the rainbow as the bridge of Iris, or as the bow of a warrior, god or giant, but rather as the precious token of the covenant or bargain made between the righteous God and his now responsive people.

4. God is eternally willing to give humanity a new start. The collapse of the old has never meant the collapse of the whole. Unless all history and religion deceive us, out of the ruin and wretchedness of universal war itself shall rise a new life, richer because more righteous.

In Noah we have one of the finest pictures of the man of faith to be found in the world's gallery. At God's word, the best word he knew, "by faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. 11: 7). Many a man, with the thought of the storied navigator in his mind, has fashioned out of the common things of life —the pitch and the gopher wood—the ark which has ridden safe upon the very waters which have submerged the mountains, all of the accustomed defenses and bulwarks of men.

It is a pity that the Deluge narrative has been so frequently submerged beneath a modern flood of child toys, pictures, rhymes, and ideas, that we lose its profound suggestiveness.

It is impossible to trace the flood story to its earthly source. We read that similar stories are told among all races of men, except the black race. The nearest ancestor of our narrative appears to be the Gilgamesh epic of Babylon. According to this poem, the hero builds his ark, brings his family and treasure into it.

> "All which I possessed I loaded on it,
> All the silver I had I loaded on it,
> All the gold I had I loaded on it,
> All the living creatures of all kinds I loaded on it."

When the rain abates, the hero sends forth a dove which finds no resting-place and returns. He sends forth a swallow, which finds no resting-place and returns.

> "Then I sent forth a raven and let it loose.
> The raven went forth, and saw that the waters had decreased; it fed, it waded, it croaked, but did not return."

After landing upon the mountain Nisir, the hero offers a mighty sacrifice to the gods.

> "The gods inhaled the odor,
> The gods inhaled the sweet odor,
> The gods gathered like flies above the sacrifice."[4]

The relationship between the two stories is indubitable, but the differences are wonderful. In the more ancient narrative we have again gross polytheism, the conflict of non-moral deities, whose foolish anger causes the flood, whose favoritism saves the hero and his family. The Scripture narrative enriched every Hebrew who found it a part of his inheritance from the long past.

In Gen. 9: 20-27 we have the story of Noah's drunkenness, and the curse of Canaan. Some men, with a blind ferocity, which would be humorous if it were not so baneful, suppose

[4] S.O.T. Vol. I, p. 373ff. Cf. Morris Jastrow, "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," p. 321ff.

this curse still to be resting upon the "children of Ham." Here Noah is not the ark-builder, the man of faith. He is rather the vintner, who partakes too lavishly of the fruit of his own vineyard. The beginnings of viniculture and of the varied uses of the grape must have greatly interested the Hebrew invaders of Palestine. Who, then, was the ancestor of vine-dressers? Another question sought answer: Why are the Canaanites, though much older inhabitants of the land, justly driven out or subdued? While the story of Noah the drunkard comes from another source than the flood story, it would not be strange to read both stories as incidents in the narrative of one man's life. The man with the long audacity of faith becomes a saviour, receives the tokens of the favor of his God, and then, the days of stress and strain past, he becomes a sensualist, his latter days casting their cloud upon the splendor of his earlier career.

V. BABEL

First Week, Seventh Day.

And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do: and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do. Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city. Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because Jehovah

did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did Jehovah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.—Gen. 11:1-9.

One of the hardest lessons for men to learn is this: that it is by each new obeisance in spirit that we climb to God's feet. Jesus was wont to promise exaltation to the humble. He "opened his mouth and taught" the multitudes, and said, first of all, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). At the very close of his ministry, he pleaded once more with his disciples, so slow to learn the royalty of humility. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper . . . and he took a towel, and girded himself. Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet" (John 13:3-5).

From the earliest days, the speakers for God among the Hebrews summoned them to humility. They lost no opportunity of attacking the arrogance which "seeks to make itself a name"; the "autotheism," or self-deification, which does not hesitate to scale heaven.

But while the compilers of the ancient documents of Israel had a primary religious interest, the story of Babel was anciently the answer to certain childish questions of the people. Apparently they asked: "What is the meaning of that great ruin on the plain of Babylon?" We read that the tower the people had in mind "was a characteristic feature of the sacred architecture in the Euphrates Valley, the staged construction with broad terraces heaped one above the other, in imitation of a mountain, with a winding road leading to the top, where the deity to whom the tower was dedicated had his seat."

Again they asked: "How shall we account for the strange diversities of language in the world?" Content with a childish etymology, which derived Bab-el (the gate of God) from balal (to confuse), the questioners got the answers to their

two questions: The lofty tower of Babylon was the work of heaven-daring rebels, who sought to scale the sky, "and make themselves a name." But God there wrought the "confusion" of their language, that they should not understand one another's speech. The story is not "perfectly disengaged from polytheism," and still bears traces of that curious early conception of a deity fearful lest man should usurp the divine prerogative (v. 6). As through a thick cloud God made himself known to the early narrators of sacred story, who conceived diversity of language to be God's punishment for sin. The "thickness" is worn "thin" to the Revelator, who writes:

"After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7:9).

Concluding Note on Genesis, Chapters I to II.

The chapters thus far studied give us glimpses of the path by which the pioneers of the Hebrew religion sought to gain for themselves and their friends the Mount of Vision. For them the path was often overgrown with thorns and thistles; but God's kindly light never failed, God's hand pushed aside the thicket, so that the "one step" needful might be made. One man got sight of the divine truth suggested by the word, "In the beginning God." Allured by that truth, he himself led his successors. Again there came to a certain traveler the conception that God made man in his own image. Led by him and his thought, subsequent generations dared to try to rise toward God's character. Again there was revealed to some of the early pilgrims of the path the truth that sin is suicide, righteousness is salvation; and through the stories of Paradise Lost, of Cain and Abel, of the Flood and of Babel, they told and retold that truth, and led their primitive childish people up the long ascent.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Of what value would the story of Creation be to the religious Hebrew?

2. What would be the probable effect of the stories of the Fall and the Deluge upon the religious thinking of the Hebrews?

3. How does the story of the Fall illustrate the entrance of sin into life, its operation in life, and its issues?

4. What part does diversity of language play in fostering or hindering the progress of the Kingdom of God?

5. What is the probable explanation of the diversity of language?

6. If your "Bible" were the first eleven chapters of Genesis, what would you be led to believe regarding God, and regarding your duty toward God and toward man?

7. Try the experiment of telling the story of the Fall as to a group of children of the primary grade, and then as to a group of high school boys.

CHAPTER II

Early Heroes of the Hebrew Race and Faith

The Patriarchs: Their Lives and Experiences with God

Introductory

In Babylon, the great king Hammurabi had codified the laws of a benevolent monarchy, laws which should make their way throughout the Semitic world (see p. 103). He had dug a canal, which provided "lasting water for the land of Sumer and Accad." He had erected "a great granary for the storing of wheat against times of famine." He had created an empire of culture and reasonable justice which should make his reign one to which the later centuries would look back as the Golden Age. Still in Babylonia priests were studying the constellations of the heavens, and the markings on the livers of sacrificial sheep, to determine the plans of the gods for the future of the individual and the empire. Meanwhile little Babylonian boys were studying in their schoolhouses, one of which has been uncovered to reveal to us "the clay tablet exercises still lying on the floor."

In Egypt, the pyramid builders had left to future millenniums their wondrous tombs; the feudal barons had followed them. In their period the Egyptians dug an earlier "Suez" Canal, and made progress in literature and in the "higher realm of conduct and character." The writers of the Feudal Age have left to us "poems, stories, and records of just and generous

dealings with the poor."[1] And now in the same general epoch we may discover the beginnings of a third people, smaller, yet greater than either Babylonian or Egyptian; a people who through the centuries were to suffer unspeakably from the empires rising in the East and the South, but were to wield a surpassing influence upon the world's life.

The story of the Hebrews begins in "the land between the rivers"; and our present chapter begins there, in Ur of the Chaldees, with the pilgrimage of Abraham, and closes with the story of Joseph, prime-minister of Egypt.

I. THE ABRAHAM CYCLE

Passages from Gen. 12: 1 to 25: 18

Second Week, First Day.

1. The Pilgrimage of Faith

Read Gen. 12: 1-9, the record of a journey shared in thought by every Hebrew to this day.

As we pass from the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we leave the "morning stories."[2]

We begin now to see the separation of one people from other peoples, a race whose task it should be to bear to the world the world's supreme religion.

We study first certain episodes in the story of the heroic founder of the race, who stands before the world as the Man of Faith.

> Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will

[1] See a fascinating book, prepared for high school pupils by J. H. Breasted, "Ancient Times," pp. 75, 135ff.

[2] Some scholars would drive Abraham the man from the field of history, and would regard him as the legendary founder, or possibly as the personification, of the Hebrew race. Their conjecture is of more interest than importance. We assume the historic character of the man, while granting that stories gathered about his personality, of which some are true to truth rather than to history. Scholars find in the narrative evidences of the use by the compiler of several of the documents which we have already noted (p. 7).

make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him.—Gen. 12: 1-4.

The writer finds our hero in his home, Ur of the Chaldees, a city sacred to the worship of the moon-god. He thinks of Jehovah as bidding him start upon a great adventure into the unknown, yet piling up before him difficulty upon difficulty: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house."

Abram appears to have been the leader of a nomadic movement from Mesopotamia. Perhaps for the first time in the history of the world a migration occurred in conscious obedience to an invisible righteous deity. There is no evidence that Abram was impelled by economic allurement, or compelled by economic pressure. The impulsion and compulsion were religious. "So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him."

Perhaps the closest modern parallel to this ancient journey is that of our own Pilgrim Fathers. Professor Fiske says: "Of all the migrations of nations, that of the Pilgrim Fathers was least influenced by the almighty dollar." We read of their departure from Leyden:

"They left that goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting-place for near twelve years, but they knew that they were pilgrims, and looked not upon those things, but lifted up their eyes to heaven, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."

They reminded the merchant adventurers that

"they had scarce any butter, not a sole to mend a shoe, that they had not sufficient swords, muskets or arms, yet they were willing to expose themselves to such dangers and trust God's good providence."

We Americans may well share the fine enthusiasm of the writer to the Hebrews, who, speaking of the ancient pilgrim-

age, writes: "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8).

Second Week, Second Day.

2. The Generosity of Faith

Read Gen. 13.

> And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar. So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.—Gen. 13:6-11.

Possibly the writer is interested in this story of ancient magnanimity and meanness, because it seeks to explain why Ammon and Moab, tribes descended presumably from Lot, had no share in the land of Canaan. Choosing the plain of Jordan, Lot resigned for himself and his descendants any claim to the land of promise. But the story carries a far more important interest. Manufactures prosper where great populations can concentrate; the nomadic life requires wide elbow-room. Abram, leader of the clan, offers his nephew and dependant his choice of land. Lot moves his tent and his family toward Sodom and ruin, makes the worldling's

choice. Suppose we question Lot as to the reason for his choice: "Is there a good chance down there to educate your family? Are there large religious opportunities? Is the place free from demoralizing influences? Or perhaps you are looking for a good chance to exert a fine moral influence? Have you considered that possibly gratitude to Abram would dictate your giving him first choice?" And Lot answers, perchance rather shamefacedly, "Well, to tell the truth, I want that land, well watered everywhere like the garden of Jehovah." Vividly the author pictures the results of the worldly choice, as contrasted with the choice of love. Lot chooses a good grazing ground, and that fundamental choice, dictated by pure selfishness, dictates all subsequent choices. We see him first a stranger in Sodom, then an elder of the city, with his seat by the gate. Scarcely can an angel's hand tear him from the city to which custom and interest and "honors" have bound him. The death of his wife, the ruin of his children, all date, according to the story, from that first worldly choice.

Lot the worldling is typical of a certain element of the Hebrew race, which was to be unsparingly condemned by the prophets, an element which has been known throughout the years and throughout the world, whether in Sodom or Singapore or San Francisco. On the other hand, there have always been found among the Hebrews multitudes of Abraham's spiritual descendants, men whose faith gives them at this day a generosity which shares the last crust with a brother Jew, a generosity almost unknown among us smug and self-conceited Gentiles. The magnanimity of faith has never departed from Israel.

Second Week, Third Day.

3. The Knighthood of Faith

Read Gen. 14.

A friend writing from Jericho, at the beginning of the

Great War, predicted the day when there would be superb golf courses down by Jericho!

"The mountains of Jericho and the mountains of Moab, with Bedouin caddies will be a very picturesque setting for the game. Jericho's 'tell' will make an excellent series of bunkers. If the ball gets into the slime pits, though, where the ancient kings came to grief, the game will be unfinished. We got stuck in them ourselves in the dark, as we drove from the Dead Sea back to Jerusalem. That was also a picturesque experience."

And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar); and they set the battle in array against them in the vale of Siddim; against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against the five. Now the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: now he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan. And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shaveh (the same is the King's Vale). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be God Most High,

who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich. —Gen. 14:8-23.

Attempts have been made, not with assured success, to identify the four warrior kings from the East with royalties whose names are carved on the monuments.

One of the most fascinating features of the narrative is the appearance of Melchizedek. In 1888 A. D. there were discovered in Tel el Amarna, Egypt, some three hundred letters, written on clay tablets, in the Babylonian cuneiform script. The letters proved to be official correspondence between the Pharaohs and the governors of Palestine. Among these tablets, dating 1500-1400 B. C., is a letter from the king of Jerusalem to the Egyptian monarch, in which the king says that he is not like other Egyptian governors, nor has he inherited his crown from his father and mother, but it has been conferred upon him by the King.[3] Melchizedek (lit. king of righteousness) may have been like this ancient correspondent of the Pharaoh, a priest-king, to whom therefore it was natural that Abram, after the manner of conquerors, should make an offering. In the narrative, for the first time "the Holy People and the Holy City are brought into connection." In allegorical yet most impressive fashion, the author of the Hebrews uses the record (Heb. 5-7).

This 14th chapter is one of many indications that we are not to think of the early patriarchs as lonely men leading their peaceful life of faith without opposition. "Formerly," says a writer, "the world in which the patriarchs moved seemed to be almost empty; now we see it filled with em-

[3] "Now as for me, neither my father nor my mother appointed me to this place. The strong arm of the king brought me to my father's house."—"Extra-Biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History," by Samuel A. B. Mercer, p. 13.

bassies, armies, busy cities, and long lines of traders, passing from one center of civilization to another." The pioneers of faith wrought out their ideals in the face of an aggressive, arrogant polytheism, a complex and powerful commercial and military age.

But the ancient story speaks to us with a strange present power of the knighthood of faith. How easy it is to say of an ingrate, when in trouble, "The man has made his bed: now let him lie in it." Abram unhesitatingly goes to the rescue of his undeserving nephew.[4] Again, Abram refuses to take any gift from the king of Sodom, for he will owe all he has to his God, nor will he spoil his witness for any amount of money. Still further, the knight of faith gives himself in high devotement to the highest, to God most high.

Second Week, Fourth Day.

4. The Prayer of Faith

Read Gen. 18, the story of the Promise and the Prayer.

> And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there are fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes: peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I

[4] The narrative doubtless idealizes Abram "as one who fights with kings, is blessed by a king, and will not take from a king so much as a shoe-latchet." Three hundred and eighteen men could scarcely have been a deciding factor in defeating the kings of the most powerful peoples of Asia.

find there forty and five. . . . And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake. And Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place. —Gen. 18: 22-28, 32, 33.

It would be delightful to study this story simply as a revelation of the soul of the ancient East. Mark the grace with which Abraham and his wife attend to the wants of the strangers; the background of Oriental hospitality upon which the picture is painted. But as students of religion, and religious men, we find a special interest in the narrative as we study the character of the deity whom Abraham is described as worshiping.

a. Abraham's God requires no sacrifice of his friend before his friend may speak with him.

b. He listens patiently to the pleading of his friend.

c. He is more merciful than his friend dreams. Abraham insists that the Judge of all the earth shall do right, asks for justice; God offers not justice alone but mercy.

d. Again Jehovah recognizes the redemptive worth of righteousness. Ten good men—such is the thought—could have saved Sodom[5] from destruction. It may be urged that the story is colored by the thinking of a far later time than that of Abraham himself, but it is certainly very ancient. In view of the persistent worship by all surrounding peoples of bloody, vengeful, non-moral, immoral gods, the chapter offers a singularly lofty conception of deity.

As through the years the story was told and told again, it must have done much to shape the religious thinking of the Hebrews.

[5] No trace of Sodom and Gomorrah has been discovered. Some have claimed that they are cities known only to folklore as having been destroyed because of their breaches of the moral law. More probably the names speak of prehistoric cities overthrown by earthquake and eruptions of bituminous matter. While the picture of God in our story is comparatively lofty, it is not the picture given us by Jesus. Our Father does not use the elements of the physical world after the fashion of our narrative to execute punishment upon the guilty.

Second Week, Fifth Day.

5. Failures of Faith

Read Gen. 12: 10-20. See Chapters 20, 16, and 21.

Very frankly the Old Testament deals with the failures of God's heroes. Frequently indeed the compiler seems to be unconscious of the failure in faith or morality. Abraham deceives the king of Egypt (Chap. 12). Again he deceives the king of Gerar (Chap. 20, perhaps a variation of the earlier theme). The author of 12 does not appear to feel any moral difficulty. The author of 20 makes an effort to save his hero's reputation. There is little to be said in defense of a man who drives into the wilderness to almost certain death the woman who has borne him a son. The author of 21 seems to feel the necessity of explaining the act, whose immorality apparently escapes the writer of the story in 16.

Throughout the Old Testament there is no forthright condemnation of concubinage or of polygamy; but we shall be able to mark great advances in ethical ideals as we proceed in our study.

We have no quarrel with the man who thinks of Abraham's deceit and cruelty, not as failures of faith, but rather as failures in the apprehension of God's true character. But one of the tragedies of our personal experience is our easy defeat by little foes. The man who is ready to sacrifice his son to his God is scared by his own imaginings of what a king may do. The man who will volunteer to lead a forlorn hope across No Man's Land falls before the tittering jibes of a couple of mates in his dugout. Browning puts into the lips of the aged John words which express the marvel of our failure:

> "Look at me who was present from the first!
> Ye know what things I saw; then came a test,
> My first, befitting me who so had seen:
> 'Forsake the Christ thou sawest transfigured, Him
> Who trod the sea and brought the dead to life?
> What should wring this from thee!'—ye laugh and ask.

What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that,
And it is written, 'I forsook and fled':
There was my trial, and it ended thus."
—"A Death in the Desert."

There are thoughtless men who say, "Let other men read the Old Testament if they will; give me the New Testament." Very well; let such men turn to Paul's discussion of the principles of Christian freedom, a discussion which helped to kindle the flame of the Reformation in the heart of Martin Luther, and let them try to explain the part played in that discussion by the pathetic story of Hagar and her outcast son (Gal. 4:21-31).

Second Week, Sixth Day.

6. The Triumph of Faith

Read Gen. *22.*

And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said,

God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided.—Gen. 22: 1-14.

The excavations of Gezer have brought to light jars containing the skeletons of little children sacrificed in ancient times to the gods. In II Kings 3:27 we have the story of the king of Moab, who "took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall" of the city. The singularly pathetic story of Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11:30-40) shows that the custom of human sacrifice was not unknown in Israel in the time of the Judges. Even as far down as the seventh century, the Hebrews were in danger of yielding to the ghastly heathen custom. Tennyson's "The Victim" suggests the place of human sacrifice in times of crisis, among our nearer kin.

Abraham stands out from among the surrounding peoples as a devotee of the invisible righteous God, Jehovah.[6] To him the most precious possession in the world is his son, the heir of all his hopes. His best thought, inspired as he believes by his God, makes this suggestion: "Shall not I do

[6] The story of Abraham's sacrifice has been thought by some to be an effort to explain why the Israelites were forbidden human sacrifice, and to warn against relapse into the hideous custom.

for my God, my just and loving God, as much as the Canaanites are willing to do for their corrupt and corrupting deities?"

The portraiture of the narrative is superb. The soul struggle is not discussed. Rather, we see the man of faith starting upon his journey with his son and his two servants, to the Mount of God. The servants are left behind, father and son go on. "So they went, both of them together." "My father, where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son." All the struggle of the soul is in those words.

To later Israel, the story brought this lesson: "Even when your heart demands that you make to Jehovah the supreme sacrifice, he will seek from your hands another gift than the child sacrifice of the heathen."

But—and this is the glory of the story—the God of Israel withholds nothing from the man who withholds nothing from him. On the Mount of Sacrifice the Lord provides. *Perfect self-surrender to the All-Perfect is perfect self-realization.*

Second Week, Seventh Day.

7. The Reward of Faith

Read Gen. 17, 21 : 1-8.

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee

throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. —Gen. 17:4-10.

The narrative suggests as the most important reward of Abraham's faith a covenant, by which Jehovah agrees to make of his friend a great nation. The covenant, according to the record, is sealed by circumcision. The rite of circumcision is observed today among many peoples, and is said to have been known among the Egyptians as early as 3998 B. C.

In Exodus 4:24ff. there is a curious story, very ancient, which suggests that Jehovah was angry with Moses and that the wife of Moses appeased the divine wrath by circumcising her son. Among the Hebrews the rite seems to have been in the nature of a tribal mark, and to have held a special religious meaning. It was thought of as a sacrifice, and indicated the dedication or surrender of the person to his God. The rite, with its ancient associations, had tremendous influence upon the Hebrews. The later prophets urged the circumcision of the heart and ears rather than of the flesh; but the legalists made much of the rite. Recall the fact that in Paul's day the Judaizing Christians believed that no man could be a Christian, and become an heir of the promises to Abraham, until he had received the external rite of circumcision.

The story of Abraham practically ends with his purchase of a tomb for his wife. The writer is immensely interested in the old story of the buying of this tomb, the cave of Machpelah. Still at Hebron may be seen a most sacred mosque, beneath which are supposed to be buried Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives. The book of Hebrews makes fine use of the thought of the apparent illusiveness of Abraham's life. After speaking of him and the other heroes of faith, the author adds: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). Long before and long

fter the days of the greatest glory of Athens, the Hebrews ooked back to Abraham the man of faith.

Paul suggests that if we are men of faith, we are children f Abraham, heirs with him of the promise. Scarcely a hristian man of the last nineteen centuries has started out pon a great adventure of faith, but has thought of Abraham, ho, at God's command, went out from his country and his indred, and his father's house, not knowing whither he went. t would not be strange if Abraham Lincoln found in the ame he bore a certain inspiration, as he pursued the pilrimage of faith. Doubtless the soldiers who answered the all of "Father Abraham" found help as they wove together heir thoughts of the strong, sad man of the White House ith their thoughts of the Father of the Faithful.

One of the liberating words of literature is this: "He beeved in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousess" (Gen. 15:6). Paul buttressed his doctrine of Christian berty with the word (Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6). And every an who has realized the futility of works and the salvation f the trustful heart, underscores with gratitude that word: *He believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for ighteousness.*"

II. THE JACOB CYCLE

Passages from Gen. 25: 19 to Chap. 36

hird Week, First Day.

1. Jacob, the Son

ead Gen. 24 and 27, whose interest is suggested by the Study.

> And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because Jehovah thy God sent me good speed.

> And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said,
>
> See, the smell of my son
> Is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed.—Gen. *27*: 19-27.

We do not dwell upon the story of Isaac. It is of great interest to students of the critical question, and to students of the customs and the literature of the East. In Gen. 24 there is a charming sketch of Abraham's effort to win a bride for Isaac, "one of the most perfect specimens of descriptive writing which the Book of Genesis contains." In our present studies, Isaac is chiefly of service as the link between Abraham and Jacob. He is a submissive, peace-loving, static sort of man, who in his latter days suffers from "fatty degeneration of the soul," and whose paternal interest is dictated largely by his interest in the venison, which his "soul loveth."

As a son, Jacob[7] is pictured as utterly unscrupulous. He betrays no trace of love or loyalty, is moved alone by ambition, ambition which is saved from utter vileness only by the man's appreciation of the real values of life. He is his mother's son, a woman selfish, ambitious, playing her favorite son with meanest deception against her older child and against her blind and aged husband.

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[7] There are some stories in Genesis in which the narrative of the individual is clearly derived from the tradition of a tribe. But it is almost impossible to explain Jacob and Esau as mere tribal reminiscences.

2. Jacob, the Brother

Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: and Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob boiled pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright.—Gen. 25:28-34.

As brother, Jacob is equally repellent. With the same careful cunning he takes advantage of the weakness of his brother, the weakness of his father.

According to Oriental usage, the birthright would bring a man a better position in the family, possibly the domestic priesthood; also, a larger inheritance of material and presumably of spiritual goods.

Throughout the entire cycle of stories, Esau appears the more attractive character. He is affectionate, liberal, a hale fellow well met, forgiving, or shall we say forgetful? But in the story of the birthright his faults become conspicuous. Big, husky man that he is, he cries like a starving baby: "Behold, I am about to die, and what profit shall the birthright do to me? Feed me with that same red stuff." In similar strain a college student will say: "I am positively starving: I must go down town and get a piece of pie." Esau would not have died if he had eaten nothing for a month. He was healthily hungry; that was all. "The temporal advantages of the birthright are shadowy, while the spiritual blessings he cares not for." The defect of the Esau character is suggested by the writer to the Hebrews: Esau is "profane." George Adam Smith has an illuminating suggestion upon this:

"The Greek word means literally, 'that which may be trod-

den,' which is unfenced, open to the feet of all. It was applied to ground outside the sacred enclosures and temples, ground that was common and public. Profane—that which is in front of the fane or shrine. Esau was a profane person, an open and bare character, unfenced and unhallowed, no guardian angels at the doors, no gracious company within, no fire upon the altar; but open to his dogs, his passions, his mother's provocations, and his brother's wiles."

In the long run we can more safely "bank" on a mean man who trusts God, and believes in the values God can give, than on a good-natured, passionate, careless, profane man. Esau might make a more agreeable room-mate; Jacob would render a more permanent service to the world.

One should read as a bit of literature the tragic appeal of Esau to his father (Gen. 27:34-40). To an Oriental, words in themselves have a magic efficacy to curse or bless. Isaac believes that, though Jacob has wrested by fraud the blessing from him, the words which have gone forth from his lips cannot be recalled, but must descend in blessings upon the head of his unworthy son. The blessing of a father was much to be desired, as he was in a position to ask very special favors of the deity of his clan.

Third Week, Second Day.

3. Jacob, the Employe

Read Gen. 29 to 31.

> And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and he overtook him in the mountain of Gilead. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream of the night, and said unto him, Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And Laban came up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountain: and Laban with his brethren encamped in the mountain of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives of the sword? Where-

fore didst thou flee secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp; and didst not suffer me to kiss my sons and my daughters? now hast thou done foolishly. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Lest thou shouldest take thy daughters from me by force. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, he shall not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.—Gen. 31: 22-32.

As an employe, Jacob is no more attractive. In the Syrian Laban he meets a man as crafty as himself, but with less skill of execution.[8]

After various successful artifices, Jacob, the employe, escapes from his employer, bearing away his wives—Laban's two daughters—a goodly number of flocks and herds, and the teraphim or household gods, which Rachel, if not Jacob, regards as highly desirable assets.

At last an agreement is made between Jacob and Laban, and ratified by a heap of stones or a pillar, which is forever to separate the Syrians from the sons of Jacob. It is a matter of curious interest that the last word of Laban to his keen, overreaching rival has come into use as the Mizpah benediction: "The Lord watch betwéen me and thee, while we are absent one from another." The words in their original connection are an adjuration to the watchful God that when the two unscrupulous men part from each other, God himself may punish the man who breaks the covenant.

[8] The student will recognize in the narrative elements of the older, bald, picturesque story, which rather enjoys the shrewdness of Jacob, and has no apology to make for his lack of scruple; he will also meet with material from the later group of writers who undertake the rather difficult task of moralizing the character of Jacob.

4. Jacob, the Religionist

a. *The Fugitive at Bethel. Gen. 28: 10-22*

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of the city was Luz at the first.—Gen. 28: 10-19.

Some Occidentals seem to be able to keep their religion in a compartment by itself, where it does not "interfere with business or politics." To the Oriental every act of life is shot through with religion. But we would note three incidents in which Jacob appears in a special sense as Jehovah's devotee.

On the site of the ancient Bethel there is "a natural stone circle" and a "curious formation of the rocks in terraces and ramparts." The exile, Jacob, is pictured as seeing in his

ream a ladder, or flight of steps, leading up to heaven, and ngels of God ascending and descending upon it. God's oice speaks to him in words of lavish promise, saying: "I ill not leave thee till I have done that which I have spoken thee of." The dreamer wakes to realize that he is on holy round; he transforms his stone pillow into a pillar, and noints it with oil, for he recognizes that that stone is surely ne house or home of God.

The story deeply impressed itself upon Jacob's descendants. n John's gospel it furnishes the striking symbolism of the ords of Jesus to Nathanael: "Ye shall see the heaven pened, and the angels of God ascending and descending pon the Son of man" (John 1:51). Christ, like the ancient aircase of the dreamer, would become the medium of comunication between the downmost man and the highest eaven. "No one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 4:6).

As the early Hebrews told this old story to their children, ney may not have conceived of the God of their story as tterly different from those spirits who the "heathen" suposed haunted and made "sacred" certain stones and trees nd wells and hills. Today in Palestine pilgrims journey sites which were "sacred" in the dim days before Abraham et foot in Canaan.[9] But it is the wonder of the Genesis arratives that, in the midst of tales of trickery and treachery nd lust, we come upon a story like this, in which the latest enerations have seen pictured their own lofty, redeeming xperiences with God.

As we read again the story of the fugitive at Bethel, it peaks home to our hearts such truths as these:

God is not remote from the loneliest man of earth.

"Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars;
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

[9] Samuel Ives Curtiss, "Primitive Semitic Religion Today."

> The angels keep their ancient places:—
> Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
> 'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
> That miss the many-splendoured thing."

There is no man so low but God can reach him.

> "But when so sad thou canst not sadder
> Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
> Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
> Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross."

Nor is there any man so completely whipped but he may win a victory on the scene of his utter defeat.

Third Week, Third Day.

b. *Jacob at Jabbok*

Read Gen. 32 for context.

> And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.—Gen. 32: 22-30.

Here is a man who for years has been fighting in complete reliance upon his familiar weapons of shrewdness, craft, cunning: fighting on the whole a winning battle. Now, like a

Nemesis, his brother, whom he has deeply wronged, approaches, with four hundred men. Jacob is alert, uses every safety device which his knowledge of Esau and his ingenuity can contrive. But a great dread seizes him. He realizes that God is his real antagonist. The mean little supplanter cannot cheat God. No trick will serve him now. One touch of the supernatural hand can paralyze his strength. With God, only his humility, his perseverance, his sense of the worth of God's values will count. "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Unable to defeat his divine opponent, "with strong crying and tears" he holds him, and pleads, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And the blessing comes in a change of name, which involves, it may be, a change of nature. No longer heel-catcher, supplanter, he is *now* Israel: "for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Did the Hebrew story tellers find in the narrative all that we find? Perhaps not. One naturally thinks of the experience of Jacob as a dream or vision of the night. The narrator evidently thinks of an actual contest with a supernatural being, a contest from which Jacob rose with the sinew of his thigh strained.

To the early listeners the story brought a plausible, satisfying explanation of origins: How does it happen that we do not eat the flesh of the sciatic muscle (evidently an old tribal taboo)? How shall we account for the name of this place Peniel,[10] the name of this brook Jabbok, our tribal name, Israel?

c. *Bethel Revisited*

> And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the

[10] Children and child people are charmed with explanations of names based upon assonance or chance resemblances of sound. The name Peniel (Face of God) may have been suggested by "some projecting rock, in whose contour a face was seen." (Cf. Hawthorne's, "The Great Stone Face.")

> foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hand, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and a terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Beth-el), he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because there God was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.—Gen. 35: 1-7.

A prosperous man, Jacob now fulfils a long delayed vow—goes back to the scene of his early exile, agony, and vision, to build an altar unto the God who appeared to him in the day when he fled from his brother. Thus does a successful man of the city slip back to the old New England home, to the little white church of his childhood, to stand once more before the altar, to renew the vows made when for the first time he broke home ties and set out to make his fortune. Thus does a soldier leave for an hour the "mud and blood and blasphemy" of the trenches, to renew his childhood vows in some ancient shrine.

In the story there is a suggestive reference to foreign gods, possibly the teraphim, or lares and penates, to which custom and superstition obstinately clung. The prophetic compilers of the ancient narratives wished their readers inwardly to digest this word that Jacob told his family to put away all these foreign gods. For centuries Jacob's descendants very cheerily retained images in their worship even of Jehovah.

But it is worth noting that there are few people today who do not cherish some of these foreign gods, and betray the smallness of their faith in Jehovah. An aged man, honored as an able and intelligent Christian citizen, when picking a basketful of strawberries, first threw a luscious strawberry

over his head "to play safe"—but with whom, with what? Lincoln would not begin a journey on Friday. Many a man, quite sure of his Christianity, will not sit down as the thirteenth at a table. It was wise of John Paton to throw the most cherished idols of his New Hebrides converts into the deepest waters of the sea, for idols have a curious habit of refusing permanent burial. Jacob advises us, not only to revisit Bethel, but, before beginning the journey, to put away the foreign gods that are among us.

Third Week, Fourth Day.

5. Jacob, the Father

Read Gen. 37: 1-4, 29-36; 42: 1-4, 42: 35-43: 15, passages helpful in the study of Jacob's character, and frequently referred to in modern literature.

While belonging strictly to the Joseph Cycle, the incidents which reveal Jacob as father may be briefly suggested here. He had deceived his own father, now his sons deceive him. He trusts none of the ten, but dotes upon his two youngest sons with a love which reminds one of senility. Suspicious to the last, he believes that all things are against him. He is induced to go down into Egypt only by the sight of the wagons sent by Joseph for his comfort. The record gives us a striking picture of the aged shepherd Jacob, now 130 years old, this bargain-maker with the Most High, standing before the Pharaoh, to give him an old man's blessing (Gen. 47: 7-10).

The story of Jacob ends with a funeral procession, and his burial in the family tomb in Hebron.

It would have been impossible for the compilers of the ancient narratives to ignore Jacob, even if they had chosen to do so. In his character and in the incidents of his career, he came much closer to the experience of his descendants than did Abraham. In his fierce pursuit of those earthly blessings which he saw gained value only as they were really

blessed by his God; in his cunning artifices to baffle cunning foes; in his sudden discoveries of deity in the hard and common pathways of the world; in his struggle with the divine, in which he overcame as he was overcome, the whole people of Israel read their own experience. And they loved this man Jacob, and proudly called themselves his children, the Children of Israel.

III. THE JOSEPH CYCLE

Passages from Genesis, Chapters 37 to 50

Third Week, Fifth Day.

1. Joseph, the Son

> And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind.—Gen. 37:9-11.

> And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and he presented himself unto him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive.—Gen. 46:29, 30.

As a young fellow, Joseph is rather priggish. It is a fine thing to have dreams, and a finer thing to be true to them; but it is seldom wise to tell them to one's brothers; not always is it judicious to mention them to one's father. Joseph's later treatment of his father is very beautiful—unless there is truth in the thought of the writer who is pained that Joseph, when risen to power, seems not to have made an effort to communicate with his father until famine drove his brothers down to Egypt. But we must not be too censorious in charac-

terizing one whose story is not a memorandum of daily doings.

2. Joseph, the Brother

Read Gen. 37, 44, 45, noting the vividness of portraiture, the pathos of Judah's plea, the almost unique attitude of Joseph to his brothers.

> Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.—Gen. 45: 1-5.

As a brother, Joseph in the early days is sufficiently irritating, but in the denouement of the story, he reveals himself as possibly the ideal character of the Old Testament. Such forgiveness as his is practically unknown in the "heathen" world. In the Old Testament, his spirit can be matched only by that of Moses. We shall see David on his death-bed bequeathing vengeance to his son, Solomon. Concerning Shimei, who taunted the king in the day of his distress, David says to his son: "Now therefore hold him not guiltless, for thou art a wise man; and thou wilt know what thou oughtest to do unto him, and thou shalt bring his hoar head down to Sheol with blood" (I Kings 2:9). Again we shall see Jeremiah, the man who, of all the prophets, most nearly approaches the character of Jesus, still calling down curses upon his own fellow-townsmen of Anathoth, the very playmates of his childhood (Jer. 11:20ff). Quite reasonably, Joseph's brethren refuse to believe that his forgiveness is genuine, and believe,

rather, that after their father's death he will "get even" with them. This forgiveness is by no means forgetfulness. He remembers what they have done, and remembers as well their characteristics. What a suggestive little hint he gives them as he sends them home with food for their families: "See that ye fall not out by the way" (Gen. 45:24).

3. Joseph, the Ruler

Read Gen. 47, an illuminating study in pre-Christian politics and ethics.

> So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was sore upon them: and the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their land. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings, that ye shall give a fifth unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.—Gen. 47:20-25.

"By a bold stroke of statesmanship, private property in land, save in the case of the priests, is abolished throughout Egypt, and the entire population reduced to the position of serfs." National food control has been known in later times and in less despotic lands than that of Egypt, but it has been exercised presumably in the interest of the ultimate freedom of "the common people." The grain policy of Joseph is ante-Christian and essentially anti-Christian. Kipling somewhat irreverently inquires:

"Who shall doubt the secret hid
Under Cheops' pyramid
Was that the contractor did
Cheops out of several millions,
Or that Joseph's sudden rise
To Comptroller of Supplies
Was a fraud of monstrous size
On King Pharaoh's swart civilians?"

But so far from being a monster himself, Joseph was, if we may judge from the record, ahead of his age, and not behind the ethics of the compiler of his story, who delights in the words of gratitude and adulation of the people now made slaves, but saved from starvation: "Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants" (Gen. 47:25).

Even in our own day political and business morality have not begun to keep pace with personal morality. And many men of spotless personal and family life have not hesitated to corrupt legislatures and to house employes in tenements whose wretchedness cries to heaven.

Third Week, Sixth Day.

4. Joseph, the Religionist

Read Gen. 39, 40, 41, to find the religious roots of Joseph's conduct, the secret of his life mastery.

A man's whole life is determined by the God he worships. Joseph's life is pictured as dominated by a holy, unescapable God. Far from home, in the land of alien deities, whom his contemporaries certainly regarded as alive and powerful; a slave, presumably bereft of his God who ruled alone in Canaan; this man cries: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" In prison, he realizes that his God is with him. In his dream-telling, he thinks of God as revealer. "Do not interpretations belong to God? . . . God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph's God, moreover, is master of events. In a very fine passage we hear

Joseph say to his brothers: "As for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). Ever his God stands "within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

In our later studies we shall see that the Hebrews did not generally and clearly attain to the conviction of the one sole, universal, righteous God until the Babylonian Exile, 586 B. C. Grant the late editing of our present narrative, it is practically certain that in very early times Joseph was portrayed as possessing for himself a practical working faith in a God who could go with him in his journeys, stay by him in his temptations, guide him in his speech, save him from his enemies, and above all keep him true to the ideals of his boyhood.

Dr. Taylor used to say, "Young man, be true to the dreams of your youth."

"A melancholy, life-o'er-wearied man
Sat in his lonely room, and with slow breath
Counted his losses, thrice wrecked plan on plan,
Failure of friend and hope and heart and faith,
This last the deadliest, and holding all.
Room was there none for weeping, for the years
Had stolen all his treasury of tears.
Then on a page, where his eye chanced to fall,
There sprang such words of courage that they seemed
Cries on a battle field, or as one dreamed
Of trumpets sounding charges; on he read
With fixèd gaze, and sad, down drooping head,
And curious, half remembering, musing mind.
The ringing of that voice had something stirred
In his deep heart, like music long since heard.
'Brave words,' he sighed, and looked where they were signed.
There, reading his own name, tears made him blind."

There is not a man of us who has not dreamed royal dreams like those of Joseph. Each of us might find in some old book, written in school-boy hand, words, brave words, of faith and purity. But the Philippines and the treaty-ports of the Orient have sad stories to tell of modern Josephs, who dreamed, then doubted, and went down. On the other hand, history delights

to teach us of the man who one day takes lunches to his brothers, another day feeds a nation and a race; of the weaver-boy who one day goes down to that same land of Africa, to expose and to begin the healing of the open sore of a continent.

That is a fine word of Lowell:

"In life's small things be resolute and great,
To keep thy muscles trained; know'st thou when Fate
Thy measure takes? or when she'll say to thee,
'I find thee worthy, do this thing for me'?"

Third Week, Seventh Day.

The Joseph Cycle consists of several strands of narrative, now lying side by side, now interwoven. The vividness of the portraiture can scarcely be matched in literature. Note the description of the scene when Joseph saw at last his brother Benjamin: "Joseph made haste; for his heart yearned over his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and came out; and he refrained himself, and said, Set on bread" (Gen. 43: 30, 31). The story-teller does not dilate upon the psychology of the incident. All is told in the deeds and the speech of the chief actor. Again study the tragic, beautiful plea of Judah on behalf of his brother, Benjamin (Gen. 44: 19-34).

Scholars have noted the extraordinary lifelikeness of the narrative. For example: we know that the birthday of the Pharaoh was celebrated by amnesties granted to prisoners. The dreams of Pharaoh are dreams natural enough to one who is the ruler of a country which is the daughter of the Nile. On the monuments the Osiris steer and seven cows often appear. Before he goes in to see the king, Joseph shaves himself, not merely perhaps that he may be decently clean, but because only foreigners and Egyptians of low birth are accustomed to wear beards. The story tells us that "shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians," and again we

know from inscriptions that the keepers of oxen and swine were thought to follow degrading occupations. The Land of Goshen has been identified. In the supposed time of our story, this region was marsh land which might well have been given to foreigners without despoiling the native population.

Three quotations may well close this study: The Hyksos dynasty, 1788-1580 B. C. was undoubtedly Semitic. "Moreover the scarabs of a Pharaoh who evidently belonged to the Hyksos time give his name as Jacob-her or possibly Jacob-el, and it is not unlikely that some chief of the Jacob tribes of Israel for a time gained the leadership in this obscure age. Such an incident would account surprisingly well for the entrance of these tribes into Egypt, which on any hypothesis must have taken place at about this age" (Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 220).

About 1580, after the expulsion of the Hyksos, Ahmose I saw to it that the feudal lords disappeared. "The lands which formed their hereditary possessions were confiscated, and passed to the crown, where they permanently remained. (There was one exception to this.) All Egypt was now the personal estate of the Pharaoh. . . . It is this state of affairs which in Hebrew tradition was represented as the direct result of Joseph's sagacity" (Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 229).

In the Tel el Amarna letters (see p. 45) there is an incident strikingly similar to that recorded of Joseph. "Yanhamu, whose name suggests Semitic origin, seems to have had control of the state granaries, and complaints were made of the difficulty of securing supplies from this high-handed official; in particular it is alleged that the people have had to part with their sons and their daughters, and the very woodwork of their houses, in return for corn" (Int. Com., p. 502).

The records of Egypt give us thus far no word of Joseph, but they do give us a situation into which his life and work would easily fit. If we could read on obelisk, pyramid, or temple wall the detailed record of his career, the story of Joseph could hardly be more significant to us, a story which

has woven itself into the fabric of the thought and literature of the world.

Concluding Note on Genesis

An American was riding on a street-car in Shanghai, China. A Chinese came courteously to his side, and said, "Washington." A Frenchman was in Russia in the earlier days of the Great War. He saw some Russian soldiers talking about him; then one of them came to him, saluted, and, with the one French word he knew, said, "Verdun." There is not an American whose honor is not more sacred to him because of Washington. There is not a Frenchman whose heroism is not more tenacious because of the memory of Verdun.

The men and the incidents recorded in Genesis were the inspiration to honor, heroism, faith, to the Hebrew people throughout their whole national existence. And even in the days of Israel's lowest estate, there were doubtless thousands who lived finer lives because their childhood thoughts were enriched by the stories we have studied.

As students of religion, our study of Genesis should help us to enter more appreciatively into the treasure-houses of life and thought, from which the prophetic spirits of later times gathered warning and inspiration for their people. But we are more than students of religion. As religious men, we may gain from our study certain permanent assets:

a. We may renew our acquaintance with stories which have influenced the religious thinking of the Christian world.

b. We may enter into lasting friendship with the old heroes who in the midst of gross darkness found and followed, however falteringly, the light which makes for us our day.

c. We may understand more clearly the way in which God slowly unveils himself to humanity, in the lives of leaders who share with others their best visions of God; a God who guides, delivers, vindicates, punishes, redeems, a God who is always seeking to give humanity a new start, and, as well, a new heart.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Compare and contrast with each other the migrations of Abraham, of the Pilgrims, of the Jamestown colonists, of the present-day immigrants to America from Europe.

2. What was wrong in Lot's choice? How do men today make that choice? Isn't it legitimate for a man to choose a home in a well-irrigated section, simply because it is well irrigated?

3. Study the use made by the book of Hebrews of the character of Melchizedek.

4. If you had known as young men Esau and Jacob, which brother would you have selected as the more certain to win true success? Justify your choice.

5. Do you think that a man wins spiritual victory by conflict or by surrender?

6. It has been said that forgiveness is Jesus' most striking innovation in morality. What would you say to this statement, in view of Joseph's attitude toward his brothers? Do you think that forgiveness of one's enemies is consistent with inflicting penalties upon them?

7. Would you regard the lifelikeness of the Joseph stories as evidence of the skill of the story-teller, or as evidence of the historic character of the narrative?

8. What contributions to the religious thinking of the Hebrews would be made by the stories of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph?

CHAPTER III

Freedom, and the Foundations of National Life and Faith

The Work of Moses in Egypt and the Wilderness

Introductory

Fourth Week, First Day.

Read Exodus 1 and 2 for picture of the environment and early life of Moses.

In the centuries following the death of Joseph, the Israelites in Egypt met with varying fortunes, and were subjected to strange influences.

As a people they must have witnessed the career of Thutmose III, 1501-1447 B. C., "the world's first great empire-builder." They may well have seen those two obelisks, which now our eyes may look upon in Central Park, New York, and in London, both commemorating the great king's fourth jubilee celebration. They may have known of the royal victories over their own relatives in Palestine.

Again, the tribal religious life may have been stirred by the activities of the "heretic," Amenhotep IV, or Ikhnaton (1375-1358 B. C.), whom the historian describes as "the most remarkable person known to ancient literature, the first *individual* in human history." This extraordinary king, surrounded by mighty temples to national deities, "grasped the idea of a world-dominator, as the creator of nature. He based the universal sway of God upon his fatherly care of

all men alike, irrespective of race or nationality." He built a new city for the worship of his universal deity. "He was afterwards known as the criminal of Akhetaton."[1] Did this royal monotheist influence Hebrew thought? Apparently not.

In 1292 B.C. Ramses II came to the throne, and reigned till 1225 B. C. He is regarded as the Pharaoh of the Oppression, a king who indeed "knew not Joseph." He was a mighty builder. To him we owe much of the glory of the temple of Karnak. "He who stands for the first time in the shadow of its overwhelming colonnades, the great hall of the temple, that forest of mighty shafts, the largest ever erected by human hands, crowned by the swelling capitals of the nave—on each one of which a hundred men may stand together—he who observes the vast sweep of the aisles —roofed with hundred-ton architraves—and knows that its walls would contain the entire cathedral of Notre Dame, and leave plenty of room to spare . . . will be filled with respect for the age that produced this, the largest columned hall ever raised by men."[2]

But with all this magnificence, there were in the palace and among the people a gross materialism and superstition. An officer, "afflicted by his deceased wife, wrote to her a letter of remonstrance, and placed it in the hand of another dead person, that it might be duly delivered to his wife."

> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved

[1] Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 355ff. The author's high estimate of the king is not fully endorsed by all writers.
[2] Ibid., p. 450ff.

> because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.—Exodus 1:8-14.

Along with the materialism and superstition, there went an almost unexampled cruelty. The building enterprises of Ramses "were not achieved without vast expense of resources, especially those of labor." In Exodus 1:11, we read of the children of Israel, "They built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses." In 1883, Naville excavated the city of Pithom. Subsequent investigators have observed that "while certain entire walls showed a free use of straw, the bricks of other adjacent walls were mixed with coarse substances such as chaff, rushes, and stems of plants, and other walls of adjacent rooms were built of bricks made without mixture of straw, stubble, or weed." From the monuments we learn of Palestinian wars carried on by Ramses II, and it would not be strange if these wars led the monarch to fear the multiplication of "enemy aliens" in his land, who at any time might become "alien enemies." His underlings would be glad enough to make "their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (Exodus 1:14).

Out of this welter of slave life a child was lifted, to grow to manhood in the house of Pharaoh. But Moses, "when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24, 25).

Our study now takes us from the palace and the brick-kilns of Egypt out into the wilderness, with its freedom and its suffering. It has been said that "religion alone can turn emigration into exodus." It was Moses whose living faith in a living God transformed the rather contemptible emigration of slaves into an exodus. The life and work of Moses must now chiefly concern us.

Read again the familiar story of the childhood of Moses (Exodus 2: 1-10), then consider:

I. MOSES, THE LIBERATOR

Passages from Exodus 2: 11 to 15: 18.

> And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.—Exodus 2: 11-15.

1. Abortive Attempts

Our hero's career as liberator begins with his rescue of a fellow-Hebrew from an Egyptian. The vehement young reformer killed the oppressor. The day after this untoward attack upon "things as they are," this John Brown's raid, Moses saw two Hebrews quarreling. The would-be peacemaker seemed to miss the peacemaker's blessing. "Thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" There are always multitudes of men who are eager to remind the young adventurer in brotherhood that he must mind his own business; and the only answer is that wherever there are brother men, there is the special and particular business of the lover of men.

Moses saw that his doing to death of the Egyptian was widely known and would be widely and inconveniently advertised. He sought safety in flight. Moses's sojourn in the

land of Midian was an epoch in his life. The wilderness gave him many gifts, among them these:

a. A knowledge of the "desert" life, which would serve him well in later days.

b. The friendship of Jethro (in some narratives Hobab or Reuel), the priest "of Jehovah," who may have done much to shape Moses's thought with reference to the laws and worship of the true God.

c. Marriage, which seems not materially to have lessened the tragic loneliness of the man's career.

d. A profound experience of Jehovah, and with the experience, a commission from Jehovah.

Fourth Week, Second Day.

2. The Liberator Commissioned

Read Exodus 3.

> And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.—Exodus 3:2-8.

The commission received by the shepherd from his God seems to have involved these elements:

a. You are to be a liberator, rescuing Israel from Egypt.

b. You are to be a leader, guiding Israel to a land of peace and plenty.

c. You are to be a lawgiver, binding Israel to Me and to my laws.

It is not necessary to inquire into the story of the burning bush, but it is well to remember Mrs. Browning's word:

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
> The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."

> And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.—Exodus 3: 13-15.

The name Jehovah,[3] or Yahweh, was perhaps not unknown to the serfs in Egypt.

In Exodus 6: 20, we read that the mother of Moses bore the name, "Jehovah is Glory." When Moses returned to

[3] "Yahweh," or Jehovah (v. footnote, p. 7) was possibly the name of the deity of the Kenite tribes of the Sinaitic peninsula. The origin of the name is unknown. Some would tell us that it comes from a word meaning "to blow": thus Jehovah would be originally the god of the tempest. The writer of the Exodus narrative thinks of the name as derived from the word "to be," so that it means to him "the God who is," or "the God who will be." To later Israel, the name came to bear the great meaning, "the eternally self-existent One" or possibly, "the uncreated Creator," or to use the word of the Revelator, the One "who is and who was and who is to come."

> "Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be.
> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Egypt with his message of liberation, the people seemingly recognized in the name, Jehovah, the name of the God whom they might rightly serve. But with the experience of insight and vision there must have come to Moses, as to many another man in the hour of loneliness and inspiration, a new appreciation of the presence and purpose of the God whose old name was now to gain new significance.

Like Jeremiah and other prophet souls of the later years, Moses hesitated, felt himself ill-equipped to undertake the appointed mission. But the old story brings its encouragement to every man: "I did not choose you *because* you were eloquent. I knew that you were not eloquent. If I need a man of eloquent speech, I have another to meet the need. What is that in your hand? The rod, the symbol and the tool of the shepherd's trade, shall work wonders for me."

> And Moses said unto Jehovah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God. And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs.—Exodus 4: 10-17.

If a man knows how to shoot straight with a small stone from the brook, he may kill the enemy of his people. If a man knows how to use well an engineer's equipment, he

may, like Alexander Mackay, open to the Gospel a land which shall reveal one of the miracles of missions. Yes, if a man has but the "gift of blindness," he may open to the dark world of the blind in China the light of literature.

It is noticeable that the commission of Moses makes nothing of Moses's own welfare, safety, or salvation. When Lincoln was urged not to utter the first great words of his "House Divided Against Itself" speech he replied, "I would rather be defeated with this expression in my speech, and uphold and discuss it before the people, than be victorious without it." As we follow Moses into his subsequent career, we find him with a like conviction that he must say the great words and do the great deeds, whether he himself go to victory or death.

Matthew Arnold queries:

> "What bard,
> At the height of his vision, can deem
> Of God, of the world, of the soul,
> With a plainness as near,
> As flashing, as Moses felt
> When he lay in the night by his flock
> On the starlit Arabian waste?
> Can rise and obey
> The beck of the Spirit like him?"

Thank God, on the fields of home and foreign missions today, and on the fields of battle there are men who "deem" as plainly, and obey as gladly as did Moses—the world's true bards and prophets.

We now trace the Liberator from his period of training in the wilderness to his task in Egypt.

Fourth Week, Third Day.

3. Liberator or Enslaver?

Read Exodus 5, with its valuable hints to men interested in "the uplift."

Ramses II, the builder, boaster, oppressor, died, "a hoary

nonagenarian." He probably would have been more modest if he had realized that some 3,000 years after his death his mummy would be seen in the Cairo Museum by Cook's tourists from a land beyond his ken across the seas.

The old king was succeeded, we read, by his thirteenth son, Merneptah IV, thought to be the "Pharaoh of the Exodus." In 1223 B. C., there was widespread revolt against the new king among the peoples of Palestine. In 1896, there was discovered at Thebes a stele on which is inscribed Merneptah's hymn of victory. On this slab occurs the earliest mention of the name "Israel" to be found in any literature. After naming peoples and kings whom he has overthrown, the Pharaoh says,

> "Israel is desolate, his seed is not;
> Palestine has become a widow for Egypt."[4]

The stele makes it clear that while some of the children of Jacob were serfs in Egypt, there were already in Palestine members of the same Semitic tribes, who were sufficiently unified to be called "Israel," and sufficiently powerful to be worthy of mention as conquered by the Pharaoh. But the stele also makes it easier for us to understand the civic confusion and royal anxiety which may well have met Moses as he returned to Egypt.

> And afterward Moses and Aaron came, and said unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Jehovah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh

[4] For picture and translation of the stele, see S. A. B. Mercer, "Extra-Biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History," pp. 88 and 133.

> said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the number of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof: for they are idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein; and let them not regard lying words.—Exodus 5: 1-9.

Moses's first request of the Pharaoh was that he should allow the Israelites to go on a three days' journey into the wilderness to celebrate a racial religious feast.[5] Moses's purpose at this juncture seems to have been to quicken the national self-consciousness and the religious loyalty of his people. The monarch's answer was the typical answer of the tyrant: "Who is Jehovah that I should obey him?"

In the presence of the most impressive temples and ritual which the world has ever known, the question might well have seemed to Moses a hard question to answer. Who indeed was this deity of a desert tribe, in whose name a man might confront the Pharaoh and hope to win from him leisure for his serfs to go off on a religious junket into the wilderness?

The effect of Moses's first demand suggests one of the notable features of much reform work. Those whom Moses thought to help were scourged to more bitter bondage, and they refused to listen to him, when he tried to show them the banner of their liberty, inscribed, "God and the People." Many a slave has thought with them that his lot would have been far easier if the "liberator" had never spoken of freedom.

4. Liberty in Sight

The purpose of Moses was confirmed and expanded by a

[5] Cf. discussion of Passover, p. 85.

eries of disasters falling upon the land and the people of Egypt, disasters so terrible and so terribly timed as to leave ne Pharaoh and Israel in no doubt that they were due to the ntrusion of Israel's God. From these unprecedented calami-es the Hebrews were free, because of their situation and neir manner of life.[6]

Read rapidly Exodus 6 to 12, a narrative from which, in the subsequent days of national anguish, seers and singers should gather comfort and inspiration.

> And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.—Exodus 12:29.

The death of the first-born children of Egypt recalls the orrors of the Black Death which swept over Europe in 333-4 A. D. It "seemed not only to the frightened imagina-ion of the people, but even to the sober observation of the ew men of science of the time, to move forward with neasured steps from the desolated East under the form of dark and fetid mist. Hecker estimates the loss to Europe s amounting to 25,000,000. The Black Death entered Eng-nd in 1348-9; the mortality was enormous. Perhaps from ne third to one half of the population fell victims to the isease." From the Journal of the Victorian Institute a riter quotes: "It is a significant fact that after eighteen hun-red years of oppression, hardship, and persecution, of the hetto and the old-clothes trade, the Hebrew race is pro-erbially exempt from repulsive and contagious disease.

[6] About the heroic figure of Moses many stories gathered. The later stories, ually attributed to the Priestly Writer, idealize Moses, and especially the iestly Aaron, and idealize the calamitous events which cleared the way for e Exodus.

Plagues of lice and flies, of boils and murrain, of frogs and locusts, are not olated phenomena in the experience of Egypt. The plague of darkness ay be a reminiscence of a "hamsin" wind, "an oppressive hot blast, charged th so much sand and fine dust that the air is darkened." Denon says that t sometimes travels as a narrow stream, so that one part of the land is light d the other dark." We are told, too, that the Nile is sometimes reddened enormous quantities of minute organisms or "fragments of vegetable matter."

They certainly do enjoy immunity from the ravages of cholera, fever, and smallpox in a remarkable degree. Their blood seems to be in a different condition from that of other people."

The history of Europe, America, and now of the Orient, is all bound up in the same bundle of life with the history of the Hebrew serfs in Egypt. The immanent God who wrought upon the mind and will of Moses to make him a coworker with "an Eternal, Creative Good Will," wrought through "natural" laws, then unknown, in a fashion which by Egyptians and Hebrews could be regarded only as the sudden and direct intrusion of a divine hand into the world and ways of men. Men used to journey in a tunnel into which from time to time, as by miracle, rays of heavenly sunlight or flashes of heavenly lightning entered. Now we travel above ground, in a world continually illumined by the divine radiance.

Fourth Week, Fourth Day.

5. The Feast of Freedmen

And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household: and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old: ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire,

and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof.—Exodus 12: 1-9.

We have already noticed that Moses's first demand upon Pharaoh was that his people might take a three days' journey into the wilderness to worship Jehovah. In connection with the last plague, there is the record of the feast of the Passover, which originally may have been identified with the feast to which Moses had wished to summon his people, possibly one of the most ancient religious festivals of the world. "Four or five thousand years ago a rude nomad killed the first lamb (of his flock) and smeared its blood on the tent-poles, that no angry god might smite him with the plague. He then ate the flesh with the family as a sacrificial meal, thanking his god, who was supposed to be a sharer of his feast." But through all the later centuries, even to this day, the feast, developed, glorified, has fittingly served as a memorial of the divine rescue of Israel from Egypt. In the days long after the Exile (586 B. C.), we find that when the Passover was to be celebrated, "bridges were repaired, sepulchers were whitened, so that they might be easily seen and avoided, that passers-by might not be made unclean. Fires on the hill tops announced that the Passover month had come." To this day on Mount Gerizim a few Samaritans, survivors of those of Jesus' day, celebrate the ancient feast with sacrifice.

In her "The Promised Land," Mary Antin tells of her experiences as a little Jewish girl in Russia:

"Another thing the Gentiles said about us was that we used the blood of murdered Christian children at the Passover festival. Of course that was a wicked lie. It made me sick to think of such a thing. I know everything that was done for the Passover from the time I was a very little girl. The house was made clean and shining and holy, even in the corners where nobody ever looked. . . . When the fresh curtains were put up, and the white floors were uncovered, and everybody in the house put on fresh clothes, and I sat down

to the feast in my new dress, I felt clean inside and out. And when I asked the four questions about the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs and the other things, and the family reading from their books answered me, did I not know all about the Passover and what was on the table and why? The Passover season when we celebrated our deliverance from the land of Egypt, and felt so glad and thankful, as if it had only just happened, was the time when our Gentile neighbors chose to remind us that Russia was another Egypt."

May the end of Czardom give to Russian Judaism a new birth of freedom and to their Passover feast a new environment!

For us the Passover has gained a precious meaning. At the close of his earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus said, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). As the host at the feast, he said, "This is my body which is given for you. . . . This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:19, 20). Paul, writing to the Corinthians about the time of the Jewish Passover, says: "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven . . . but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7). When, therefore, we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are linking ourselves with the religious life, not alone of the Hebrew race, but with the upreaching life of the early nomads of the Semitic world, who through the thick darkness of superstitious fear were feeling for the truth behind the thought that without suffering there is no redemption.

Fourth Week, Fifth Day.

6. The Exodus

(The way out)

Read Exodus 14, 15, for complete story.

> And the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

> And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto Jehovah. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. . . .
>
> And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.—Exodus 14: 9-13, 21.

Kent describes the departure from Egypt as concisely as possible:

"Grievous plagues afflicted the Egyptians, rendering them for the time incapable of checking the shepherds in their sudden flight. With flocks and families, therefore, they set out under the leadership of Moses for Sinai, the abode of their God, and for their former home in Canaan. But circumstances led them to turn toward the south, where beside the arm of the Red Sea they were overtaken by the Egyptian army in pursuit. Their cause seemed hopeless, since they could do little to defend themselves against their well-armed foes. In this crisis a strong east wind arose which blew all night, driving back the shallow waters, so that it was possible for them to pass over and thus escape, while the Egyptians following them perished."

The deliverance left deep its mark upon the memory and the literature of the Hebrew people. The psalmists and the prophets alike use the incident as the measure of the mighty redemptive power of Jehovah, ever at hand to save a responsive people. Some such impression of divine deliverance was made upon the people of England by the

destruction of the Spanish Armada. Paul, by the way, found for himself a new measure of the power of God. Greater than the power which God exerted in saving his people from Egypt was the power which God exerted when he raised Jesus Christ from the dead, a power ever at the disposal of the Christian (Eph. 1: 19-23).

II. MOSES, THE LEADER

Passages from Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Fourth Week, Sixth Day.

Read rapidly Exodus 16, 17, 18, characteristic incidents of the Wanderings.

It is said that the route taken by the Israelites into the wilderness was not that taken by armies on their way to or from Egypt, but rather the path of runaway slaves.

Of many incidents which have found their way into the hymnology and indeed all the literature of the Christian world we may not speak. The earlier documents tend to hold to the bald facts of the journey. The later idealize much. The writers living in the memory of the ruined temple of Solomon and of the Exile, were inclined to emphasize wherever possible the divine intrusion into the common events of the wanderings.

1. The Challenged Leadership

One of the striking elements of the story is the murmuring of the people against Moses. Moses was a great "labor leader" as well as religious leader. And he was despised and hated often by the men for whom he willingly would have died. Amid the trials of the wilderness, the bricks made without straw and the lash of the taskmaster were forgotten, and the leeks and onions and garlic of Egypt sent their appetizing odors across the Red Sea into their very nostrils.

The murmuring more than once became mutiny. One is reminded of Lincoln, who was called by one party "nigger, nigger-lover"; by the other party, "the slave-hound of Illinois." A cartoon of the dark days of the Civil War represents Lincoln as enthroned upon the bayonets of his infuriated soldiers.

Both men learned what we "Western Goths" may all

"Find out, some day: that nothing pays but God,
Served whether on the smoke-shut battle-field,
In work obscure done honestly, or vote
For truth unpopular, or faith maintained
To ruinous convictions, or good deeds
Wrought for good's sake, mindless of heaven or hell."

2. The Leader and His Aides

> And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for the thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee: be thou for the people to Godward, and bring thou the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said.—Exodus 18: 17-24.

A notable incident of the journey is the visit of Jethro to the camp of Israel. He suggested a division of labor, which

should relieve Moses of the wear and tear of exclusive responsibility. If we could today select our public officials on the basis of Jethro's suggestion, most of our political troubles would pass away like mist before the morning sun.

"It is supposed that Alfred the Great, who was well versed in the Bible, based his own Saxon constitution of sheriffs, counties, etc., on the example of the Mosaic division, and thus it may be that the English nation owes something of its free institutions to the generous interest of an Arabian priest."

Perhaps in the story of the Seventy Elders (Num. 11:11-29), we have an alternative narrative to that in Exodus 18. The record is delightful. Moses found too heavy the burden laid upon him. But God lays on no man a burden heavier than he can bear. He bade Moses select seventy men, good men and true, to bear the burden of the people with him. Two of the men chosen did not appear at the Tent of Meeting but began to prophesy, to speak for God, right in the midst of the camp. Joshua, who was one day to know better, rushed breathless to Moses: "Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. . . . My lord Moses, forbid them." How fine is Moses's answer: "Art thou jealous for my sake? would that all Jehovah's people were prophets!" No more murmuring, no more backsliding, no more defeats, nay, rather, tremendous impact upon the heathen tribes about! All Jehovah's people speakers for God! A prayer to be fulfilled when God's Spirit shall rest upon them, a condition to be fulfilled when God's people obey God. God giveth his Holy Spirit to them that obey him.

Fourth Week, Seventh Day.

3. The Leader's Committee of Investigation

Read Num. 13 for context.

> And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days. And they went and came to Moses,

and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Howbeit the people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. Amalek dwelleth in the land of the South: and the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the hill-country; and the Canaanite dwelleth by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan.

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.—Num. 13:25-33.

Passing for a moment the incidents occurring at Sinai, we note the story of the spies. The men who return from Canaan with their evil report are the typical stand-patters of the world. Progress is desirable, obstacles are insuperable. Well may the writer of the Hebrews in the later days bid his Christian friends take heed, lest they, too, fail to enter into the land of rest, because of unbelief (Heb. 3:1-10). Humanity moves onward under the impulsion of high-souled men like Caleb. men who do not ignore the difficulties, who do not give their brains an anesthetic and tell us there are no giants to overcome, but who bid us "go up at once," for God is with us.

"'Dreamer of dreams!' We take the taunt with gladness,
Knowing that God, beyond the years you see

Hath wrought the dreams which count with you for madness
Into the substance of the life to be."

4. The Leader, and the Men Who Thought They Had "Arrived"

Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle; the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Sebam, and Nebo, and Beon, the land which Jehovah smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle; and thy servants have cattle. And they said, If we have found favor in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession; bring us not over the Jordan.

And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which Jehovah hath given them? . . .

And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: but we ourselves will be ready armed to go before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan, and forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side of the Jordan eastward.

And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will arm yourselves to go before Jehovah to the war, and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before Jehovah, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land is subdued before Jehovah; then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless towards Jehovah, and towards Israel; and this land shall be unto you for a possession before Jehovah. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against

Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out.—Num. 32: 1-7, 16-23.

The tribes—Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh—had found fine pasture lands for their flocks and herds, and they thought it would be a beautiful thing to remain on the east side of Jordan, while their friends and comrades were doing the fighting for the promised land. What was the use of struggling, when they could get all they wanted without the struggle? Moses has been designated as the meekest man who ever lived, but he let loose the vials of his wrath upon these tribesmen because they were weakening the hands of their brothers. Finally an agreement was reached. The men would build folds for their flocks, and fenced cities for their wives and little ones, and they themselves would go ready armed before the Children of Israel, and would not return to their houses until every man should have received his inheritance. The tribesmen were true to their promise, and after the death of Moses marched in the vanguard to win for their brothers the same rights which were theirs. And it may be that the day will come to America, when we shall retain our possessions only on condition that we give ourselves whole-heartedly and persistently to the great fight of our brothers for "a fair chance at all good things."

The incidents of the wilderness have stirred the imagination of seers in all the later years. The stories of the brazen serpent, of Balaam, of Og and his mighty bedstead, of Amalek and the upheld arms of Moses—these and scores of others make the wilderness a paradise for poets and preachers. Generations of religious men have thought of their earthly experiences in terms of the wandering.

"'Forward!' be our watchword,
Steps and voices joined;
Seek the things before us,
Not a look behind;

Burns the fiery pillar
  At our army's head;
Who shall dream of shrinking,
  By Jehovah led?
Forward through the desert,
  Through the toil and fight;
Jordan flows before us,
  Zion beams with light."

The Israelites left Egypt, a horde of slaves. Their feeble unity was due mainly to their common dependence upon Moses, their liberator and leader. Their religion was but the pale reflection of his burning faith in Jehovah.[7] In the years of wandering, there were times when the gate to the land of promise seemed wide open. Kadesh-Barnea, the present Ain Kadis, or Holy Well, was the rendezvous of the Hebrews. A traveler, who was guided by Arabs to the place, "found a lofty wall of limestone, at the base of which issued forth a copious spring or several springs, which emptied themselves into a large artificially constructed basin, then into another of smaller size, and, continuing to flow down into the valley, spread fertility on either hand until the waters ultimately disappeared beneath the sands of the desert. For a generation this fertile spot was the goal or the starting point of the wanderings of nomad Israel." In our own time, in the Great War, there was a day when an added ounce of pressure might have forced open the Dardanelles, and brought the War appreciably nearer its close. But as years of agony were needed to strengthen the cause of the Entente forces, to purify their ideals, and to weld them into one army of democracy; so were the years of wilderness wandering needful to strengthen, purify, ennoble the conduct and ideals of the clansmen of Israel. In the wilderness, they learned to think of themselves as a people with a common destiny, bound up with the will of their national God, Jehovah.

[7] "The monotheism of Babylonia and Egypt was pantheistic speculation. Hebrew monotheism was a religious experience, and between these two there appears to me to be a great gulf fixed. . . . I believe that monotheistic tendencies in the age of Moses, supposing them to have reached him, can have contributed very little to his knowledge of God."—Skinner.

III. MOSES, THE LEGISLATOR

Passages from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Fifth Week, First Day.

Read Exodus 20:2-17; compare Deut. 5:6-21 for final versions of the Ten Commandments.

Throughout their recorded history, the Children of Israel looked back to Moses, not alone as Liberator and Leader, but as Lawgiver. Sinai (or Horeb) was considered the earliest seat of Israel's deity, the worthy scene of the great transaction by which the divine law was given to Moses, and through Moses to the people.

As we now have them, the "Mosaic" laws are of many different ages. Some of the laws reflect the life of an agricultural people; some are directed to the needs of a people ruled by kings, to the needs of priests serving in a central temple in Jerusalem. Some express the interests of political and ecclesiastical leaders after the Exile, whose only desire was to preserve a people holy unto Jehovah. Much of the legislation is attributed to Moses, and is well styled the Law of Moses. It is his, or is the varied fruitage of principles enunciated by him.

1. The Decalogue

(The Ten Words)

There are two main versions[8] of the Ten Commandments, both of which developed from a briefer code, very noble in its conception of duty toward God and man. This simpler code[9] may have read somewhat as follows:

(1.) Thou shalt have no other gods beside me.
(2.) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
(3.) Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.

[8] For reference to third variant decalogue, recently discovered, see Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 94.
[9] For a still earlier "decalogue," see discussion, p. 101.

(4.) Remember the Sabbath day to hallow it.
(5.) Honor thy father and thy mother.
(6.) Thou shalt do no murder.
(7.) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
(8.) Thou shalt not steal.
(9.) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
(10.) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

The first five commands deal with religion, "piety." The second five deal with ethics, "probity."

The first command does not imply the denial of other gods than Jehovah. For at least five centuries Israel popularly regarded the gods of other peoples as alive and sovereign in their territories. The command does insist that Israel shall worship Jehovah only. They are his people, he is their God.

The second command would lift the people above idolatry. For hundreds of years in Canaan Israel was to use "without offense" images in worship. That is, this command was unknown or ignored. But we shall see how image worship cheapened and degraded religion among the Hebrews (p. 158ff).

The third command may have been intended originally to forbid the use of the sacred name in formulas of magic, such as constituted a great part of the ritual of Egypt and Babylonia.[10] To us the command brings an exigent prohibition of profanity and irreverence. In many cases, profanity is undoubtedly a skin disease rather than a cancer eating at the heart. But it would be abhorrent for any man to drag his mother's name into the ordinary loathsome camp profanity. May one deal more loosely with the name of his God? It used to be said of the Italians, that they ate their bread and cheese on the high altar. It has been said that the practice in the United States is to turn all sacred things into a joke.

[10] For a different interpretation, cf. Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 101.

Fifth Week, Second Day.

The fifth and seventh commandments aim to preserve the integrity of the family life and line. It is probable that both commandments were directed to adult males.[11] Children who could be sold into slavery or killed for drunkenness and gluttony (Deut. 21:18-21), probably did not need the fifth commandment. The seventh imposed an obligation upon the husband, such as had always been borne by the wife.

The Old Testament offers no remedy for the infinite tragedies of polygamy. Women who hold lightly the blessings of Christianity may well recall the scriptural incidents of favoritism, jealousy, and folly, due to the system, and may well remember the words of the traveler, Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop: "In some countries I have seldom been in a woman's house or near a woman's tent without being asked for a drug with which to disfigure the face of the favorite wife or to poison the favorite wife's infant son. This request has been made of me not less than two hundred times." The home "holds the key to the salvation of the state." President Eliot entitles one of his essays, "The Forgotten Millions." He reminds us that as we talk of Fifth Avenue and the "slums," we are forgetting the millions of people in this country who live comfortable, unostentatious, decent lives, love their families, work for the common good. These are the people who ensure the stability of the Republic. Christianity has put new meaning into the old commandment.

The ninth commandment insists upon the honor of the lips. It has been noted that the punishment for false witness in Babylonian and Hebrew codes was the same punishment as would have been meted out to a man really guilty of the crime charged. Pope suggests how we today disobey the ancient command:

> "Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike."

[11] Ibid., pp. 111 and 118ff.

But "disobedience to this command brought Jesus to the cross."

The tenth commandment approaches apparently the lofty morals of the New Testament, and insists upon the honor of the heart.[12] Many of our own social customs make this last commandment hard to obey. The street cleaner who dodges in and out among the limousines, the little girls whose wan faces peer through the windows of department stores at the amazing array of lingerie—these and others our civilization tends to make the victims of "moral overstrain."

The Ten Commandments, becoming ever more influential in the life of later Israel, did much to quicken the people's reverence for Jehovah and their sense of obligation, not to all their brother men indeed, but to their brother Hebrews. We miss the positive note of Jesus. Men do not win salvation by negations. We miss, too, any message of joyous and aggressive love for all men everywhere. But it is a striking tribute to these early laws that only one of them, the fourth, has been abrogated, even in outward form, by the increasing revelation of God's will.

The Sabbath law is worthy of special study at this point. Professor Jastrow has reminded us[13] that in Babylon the fifteenth day of the month bore the name *shabattum*. In a cuneiform text we have the equation, "Day of rest of the heart = *shabattum*." Among superstitious people days of transition have always been days of uncertainty and fear. The day, then, when the moon had completed its growth was a specially anxious time. "The day of rest of the heart was simply a technical term for a day of pacification . . . one on which it was hoped that the angered deity would cease from manifesting his displeasure." It appears also that the days of the moon's quarters were counted in ancient Babylonia as of special religious significance: There is a "link" uniting the Babylonian and early Hebrew Sabbaths. Gradually the Hebrew Sabbath broke from its connection with the phases

[12] But cf. Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 128.
[13] Morris Jastrow, "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," p. 134ff.

of the moon, and occurred every seventh day. In the earlier times the Hebrew Sabbath was a day of festal joy, perhaps not unmixed with fear. The *rest from work* was incidental. The priestly narrator of the creation story delights in the thought that God rested on the seventh day.

> And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.—Gen. 2: 1-3.

He would seek to ensure the rest element of Sabbath observance by suggesting the origin of the Sabbath in the rest of the toiling God. But how transfiguring is the change which has been wrought in the institution of the Sabbath—no longer a day when easily angered gods may be wisely implored to pacify and to rest their hearts, but a day when man may rest from his toil, in the memory of the God who rested from his labors of creative love for his world.

> Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. —Exodus 20: 8-11.

In the Deuteronomic variant of the fourth commandment we have a further enrichment of the meaning of the Sabbath law. Here the Sabbath is a day of grateful remembrance and refreshment, not only for the Hebrew freeman himself, but for the man-servant and the maid-servant as well. The Sabbath, then, is God's gift of love to the tired, and extends its benediction even to the beasts who toil for man.

> Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.—Deut. 5: 12-15.

Neither here nor elsewhere in the Old Testament is there any suggestion that those who had themselves been set free from Egyptian bondage should undertake to abolish the institution of slavery. But we do have here, as in many other laws, the purpose to mitigate the hardships of the slave life. It would be well if in our memorizing of the Ten Commandments we could use the Deuteronomic version of the fourth command. Not so much in the superficial imitation of the pictured act of deity, but in the actual elevation of humanity do we find the fundamental purpose of wise Sabbath law.

We shall see that in the later years of Israel, the observance of the Sabbath became a burden too heavy to be borne, a burden evaded by all manner of pious fraud; but a writer says truly that "the Hebrew Sabbath . . . became one of the most significant contributions of the Hebrews to the spiritual treasury of mankind." Missionaries to Africa tell us that a most important advance upon heathenism is made, when the Sabbath enters with its solemn joy into the sad, endless, brutal monotony of the heathen life.

Jesus and his interpreter Paul have set us free from the rigid observance of any set day of the week, and bidden us hold every day, as every duty, sacred to God. Our observance of the Lord's Day is not a twentieth century substitute for the ancient observance of the Sabbath; nor is it our compulsory submission to a law written upon a table of

stone. It is the act of the Christian, who, as Luther says, is "the most free lord of all, and servant of none."

Fifth Week, Third Day.

2. A Decalogue before the Decalogue

Read Exodus 34, noting its glorious picture of Jehovah (verses 6, 7) and its description of Moses's shining face.

Compare II Cor. 3: 12-18.

Behind the brief code which we have studied, there seems to lie an earlier code of Ten Words. In Exodus 34: 28, we have the statement, "He [Moses] wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." As we study the preceding verses, we are able with fair certainty to find the Ten Words to which the verse refers. As translated and numbered by Badé (p. 91) they are as follows:

(1.) Thou shalt not prostrate thyself before any other god (v. 14).
(2.) Thou shalt make thee no molten gods (v. 17).
(3.) Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread (v. 18).
(4.) Every first-born is mine (v. 19).
(5.) The feast of weeks thou shalt observe (v. 22).
(6.) And the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year (v. 22).
(7.) Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven (v. 25).
(8.) The offering of the Passover shall not be left until the morning (v. 25).
(9.) The best of the firstlings of thy ground thou shalt bring to the house of Jahveh thy God (v. 26).
(10.) Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk (v. 26).

Some writers enumerate the laws differently; some add the Sabbath law (v. 21).

In these early laws there is far more emphasis upon ritual than upon righteousness. When our missionaries first went to the South Seas and to Micronesia, they found among the natives a ritual of great influence. As soon as the people

became responsive to the new teaching, they were extremely anxious to know just how to practice the white man's worship.[14] This early decalogue speaks of a time when the grave problem of religion was this: "How shall I come before Jehovah? What taboo or divine prohibition must one observe?"

But the position of a people is not so important as their direction. These early laws were for the most part moving toward loftier conceptions of the character of God and the task of man.

3. "The Book of the Covenant"

Passages from Exodus 20: 22 to 23: 19

Read rapidly Exodus 21-23: 19 as a study in early law, and a picture of early Hebrew culture.

From the maze of laws, civil and religious, which we meet as we study the Pentateuch, we may select as typical and almost certainly early the section commonly called the Book of the Covenant.[15] The laws answer such questions as these: "How shall we treat slaves? How shall we deal with the man who borrows and misuses the thing he has borrowed? How shall we treat the man who is careless with fire? How shall we deal with a thief, a burglar, a slave-beater, a kidnapper, a murderer?" They reveal the life of a people feel-

[14] A striking illustration of the interest of primitive people in the cultus is given by Jean K. Mackenzie in her "The Ten Tyings." *Atlantic Monthly*, 1916, p. 796ff. Speaking of the communal life of Africa, she says: "To every qualified Christian many such women come, and men come; wherever the Word of God has been accepted in our region there has begun to be a busyness about the practice of religion. The technique of the art of Christian living has always proved to be a matter of immediate excitement. The little brown hut where the foremost Christian lives, the man or woman most approved as expert by the neighbors, becomes a sort of school of technique. . . . 'And that tying about the day of Sunday, how may you do when the headman has sent you to the beach with a load of rubber? Himself he walks in the caravan, and in his heart is such a hunger for goods that he hates to sleep at night, let alone rest of a Sunday.' "

[15] The section is not a unit. It includes the "words," the "judgments," and a group of moral and ethical enactments. Encyclopædia Britannica article on "Exodus," p. 86.

ing the obligations of a settled society, and looking upon every civil obligation as a religious duty. The following passage may serve to illustrate the character of the laws:

> If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the shocks of grain, or the standing grain, or the field are consumed; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.
>
> If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, he shall pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall come near unto God, to see whether he have not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. For every matter of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, whereof one saith, This is it, the cause of both parties shall come before God; he whom God shall condemn shall pay double unto his neighbor.
>
> If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: the oath of Jehovah shall be between them both, whether he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods; and the owner thereof shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution. But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness; he shall not make good that which was torn.
>
> And if a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make restitution.—Exodus 22: 6-14.

Fifth Week, Fourth Day.

4. Moses and Hammurabi

We come now to one of the most fascinating discoveries of modern scholarship. "In the winter of 1901-2, a French expedition, excavating at Susa, the ancient Persepolis, uncovered the fragments of a block of black diorite, which when fitted together formed a great stele. At the upper end of the front side of this is a sculptured bas-relief representing

the king Hammurabi receiving his code of laws from the seated sun-god, Shamash. Immediately below the bas-relief is the longest Semitic inscription hitherto discovered. The whole inscription may be estimated to have contained forty-nine columns . . . and about eight thousand words." While some earlier legal inscriptions have been found, this is "the oldest body of laws in existence, and must henceforth form the starting point for the systematic study of historical jurisprudence."

Hammurabi was the sixth king of the First Dynasty of Babylon, and reigned 2250 or 2000 B. C. As we have seen (p. 39), he was a superb ruler, a true father of his people. He writes in his epilogue these words:

"That the strong may not injure the weak, in order to protect the widow and orphans, I have in Babylon, the city where Anu and Bel raise high their heads, in E-Sagil, the temple, whose foundations stand firm as heaven and earth in order to bespeak justice in the land, to settle all disputes, and heal all injuries, set up these my precious words, written upon my memorial stone, before the image of me, as king of righteousness."

It is wonderful to note how modern are the problems which engage the attention of the ancient legislator. For example: What shall be done to the man who offers bribes to a witness in court? What shall be done to the man who lets his sheep feed upon another's land? What shall be done to the man who doesn't keep his dykes in repair? What shall be done to conspirators, found meeting in the house of a tavern keeper? The back room of a saloon has been an object of concern to lawmakers and judges for a goodly number of years.

But the supreme interest of the discovery lies in the similarities and contrasts between the code of Hammurabi and that of "Moses." The Hebrew lawgiver himself lived at least seven hundred years after the lawgiver of Babylon, and many "Mosaic" laws bear evidences of enunciation in still later centuries.

The similarities between the two codes are, at points, very striking. Note the law of personal injury:

Ham. 206: If a man has struck a man in a quarrel, and has caused him a wound, that man shall swear, "I did not strike him knowingly," and shall answer for the doctor.	Exodus 21:18, 19: And if men contend, and one smite the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keep his bed; if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.
Ham. 196, 197: If a man has caused the loss of a gentleman's eye, one shall cause his eye to be lost. If he has shattered a gentleman's limb, one shall shatter his limb.	Lev. 24:19: And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him: breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be rendered unto him.

There are laws of the Mosaic code which formulate one procedure for the free man, another for the slave; but there is no Mosaic law which holds the poor man cheaper than his rich neighbor.

Again note the law against kidnapping:

Ham. 14: If a man has stolen the young son of a freeman, he shall be put to death.	Exodus 21:16: And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

At times the code of Hammurabi seems more merciful than the Mosaic code. Thus:

Ham. 195: If a man has struck his father, one shall cut off his hands.	Exodus 21:15: He that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

Usually the more ancient code is harsher. For example, take the fugitive slave law:

Ham. 16: If a man has harboured in his house a man-servant or a maid-servant fugitive from the palace, or from a poor man, and has not produced them at the demand of the commandant, that householder shall be put to death.

Deut. 23: 15, 16: Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it pleaseth him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

At this point, the Mosaic law (here the Deuteronomic law) reveals a far loftier humanitarianism than that of Hammurabi, loftier indeed than that of the fugitive slave law in the United States.

The Babylonian and Mosaic codes contain many almost identical laws, and present some cases of actual verbal agreement. This fact means simply that Babylonian influence had extended throughout the Semitic world, and that Israel's lawgivers utilized some of the ancient laws which were adapted to the Israelitish situation. But while the code of Hammurabi consists of the enactments of a benevolent despot, content with one law for the "gentleman," another law for the "poor man," the Old Testament laws are "those of an essentially democratic people." Moreover, the earlier code is a civil code. It deals with certain ecclesiastical affairs, but not with the "religious" aspects of life. While the laws are the gift of the sun-god Shamash, there is no special insistence on religious motives. The glory of the Old Testament laws is their emphasis upon the relation of Israel to Jehovah. The nest of the little bird is not to be mistreated, weights and measures are not to be juggled; why? Jehovah loves justice and dooms the cruel. To the Hebrew, every civil law presents a corollary from the fundamental proposition of Hebrew thinking: "We are Jehovah's people." Wrong is not crime, alone; it is sin against Jehovah. Obedience to law is the human response to the divine plea: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and

how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples" (Exodus 19:4, 5).

The discovery of the ancient law code gives us a new appreciation of our debt to the Babylonian civilization. (By the way, it has been suggested that every time a man looks at his watch he acknowledges his debt to the astronomers of Babylon.) It helps us to realize that the laws of "Moses" are not a kind of Jonah's gourd, springing up in a night; but rather, a great tree with many branches, and also with many roots, a tree fed by heaven's rain and heaven's dew. The discovery leads us to a bigger God, whose light shines not alone upon Israel, but upon every man coming into the world, upon every nation which at any time has sought the peace and the power of justice.[16]

Fifth Week, Fifth Day.

5. The Tabernacle

A writer says:

"The arrival of the Israelites at Sinai marks the greatest of all turning points in Israel's history. We reach what was the core and kernel of the nation's life, the covenant by which all the tribes were united in allegiance to one God, and the laws—ritual, social, and moral—upon which the covenant was based. It was a very small nation, a mere collection of nomad clans. But their supreme importance, greater than that of any other of the great nations of the earth, lay not in their history or in the extent of their territory, but in the fact that they contained the germ out of which grew the kingdom of God. And the germ was planted at the mountain of God."

In his religious organization of his people, Moses inaugurated or authorized certain ceremonies, the ritual of the worship of Jehovah.

[16] The entire Code of Hammurabi, with valuable discussion, may be found in H. B. D., extra volume, under title, "Code of Hammurabi."

> Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that every one that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent. And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent: and Jehovah spake with Moses. And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.—Exodus 33:7-11.

The tabernacle of the wilderness was—at first, certainly—a tent outside the camp, to which Moses and his attendant repaired to hear the oracles of Jehovah.[17]

Within the tent of meeting was the ark, a chest not unlike the portable shrines of other Semitic peoples. For centuries the ark was doubtless regarded by the common people not only as the symbol of Jehovah's presence, but actually as "the focus of divine powers." Defeats were attributed to the absence of the ark from the armies, victories were expected from its presence.

> And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up to the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we are here, and will go up unto the place which Jehovah hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of Jehovah, seeing it shall not prosper? Go not up, for Jehovah is not among you; that ye be not smitten down before your enemies. For there the Amalekite and the Canaanite are before you, and ye shall fall by the

[17] Later writers, touched by the glamour of the memories of Solomon's temple, glorified the simple old tent of meeting, and conceived of it as a kind of movable temple, always in the center of the camp, surrounded by the thousands of thousands of Israel.

sword: because ye are turned back from following Jehovah, therefore Jehovah will not be with you. But they presumed to go up to the top of the mountain: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekite came down, and the Canaanite who dwelt in that mountain, and smote them and beat them down, even unto Hormah.—Num. 14: 40-45.

Compare I Sam. Chapters 4 and 5.

But a god who journeys with his people in their journeyings, fights with his people when his ark is with them, is not imprisoned in or near some definite "sacred" tree or hill or well. Even the crude popular thought of Jehovah was moving toward the conception of a God who could go with those who fight, and stay with those who abide at home, "and be everywhere for good"; the conception, that is, of an omnipresent, benevolent God.

■

Fifth Week, Sixth Day.

Concluding Notes

a. The Death of Moses

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the hinder sea, and the South, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar. And Jehovah said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.—Deut. 34: 1-7.

"Next to Christ himself, Moses is the greatest 'founder' of religion." To him three faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, own allegiance. The man himself was greater than his deeds. The crude reformer of the early days, child of generous impulse, disciplined by the lonely years in Midian, inspired by his experience of Jehovah, became one of those to whom God reveals himself, one of those who

"Rise to their feet, as He passes by,
Gentlemen unafraid."

His passionate devotion to Jehovah ministered to a passionate, self-forgetful devotion to Jehovah's people and their highest interests. One should underscore the dramatic prayer: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:31-33). He knows no failure but the failure of his people, no success apart from theirs.

The lonely man had guided his wayward, stubborn, vacillating people to the border of the Land of Promise. And now he longed to set foot upon the land to which his pilgrim thoughts had been journeying through all the years. But he heard the divine mandate, "Thou shalt not go over this Jordan." But to him, as to other men who seem just to miss their goal, were given certain great compensations:

a. He was permitted to see the good land. It's a great thing to see an ideal, into whose realm one cannot enter.

b. He was permitted to select and to strengthen the man who was privileged to lead Israel into the land which he himself could only see from afar. It has been truly said that the greatest contribution to life that a man can make is to share with others both the contagion of his character and his best vision.

c. He learned, what every brave and disappointed man may learn: "In the will of God is our peace." And so he died,

and no man knows the place of his burial to this day. It is better so. The master had done his work, and his tomb, if known, would have been through the subsequent ages the goal of idolatrous pilgrimages.

"Let the thick curtain fall;
I better know than all
How little I have gained,
How vast the unattained. . . .

Sweeter than any sung
My songs that found no tongue;
Nobler than any fact
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,—
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win. . . .

Hail to the coming singers!
Hail to the brave light-bringers!
Forward I reach and share
All that they sing and dare."
—Whittier, "My Triumph."

At the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah are seen talking with the Master of us all. The Revelator hears the heavenly chorus singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, the song of the lawgiver and of the Redeemer.

Fifth Week, Seventh Day.

b. The Creed of an Israelite at Kadesh

Could we have questioned one of the more intelligent of the Israelites who gathered about the ancient springs of Kadesh, concerning his people and his faith, he might have answered in some such way as this: "The fathers of our people came from the land of Mesopotamia, and the home of the moon-god. But by an impulse of religion, they were driven from the oldtime home and at last they entered Canaan, the land which even now seems to lie just beyond

our reach. Forced by hunger some of the family moved down into Egypt, and prospered in the time of Joseph our ancestor. But as our numbers increased, we were made serfs, objects of hate, suspicion, and fear. But a *man* came at the fateful time to set us free. Moses called us to the worship of the true God, whose name is Jehovah. By a mighty hand our God rescued us from the mighty gods of Egypt. By Moses Jehovah has led us through the wilderness. At the mountain of Sinai we received the laws of our dread and mighty God. If we obey these laws, we live; if we disobey, we die. The sacred ark in the tent of meeting without the camp is the symbol, yes, the throne of our God, and our leader is the mediator between us and our God. Other nations have their gods, living and strong, but for us there is only one God to worship. He goes with us, fights our battles for us. Yet his proper seat is Sinai [Horeb]. Jehovah is ours, and we are his. His fate is knit with ours, and ours in turn with his. We quarrel often, one clan with another, we are jealous each of the other; ever and again we have proved unworthy of our leader and our God; but our enemies, our leader, and our God have bound us together, and we are one people, Jehovah's possession."

Even while answering our questions, this Israelite might fall in terror before the thunder. "the voice" of God. He would confess to fear when in the neighborhood of certain trees or stones, wells or hills, held sacred because haunted by spirits, bad or good.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Why may the ambitions and enterprises of Ramses II have affected harmfully the Hebrews in Egypt?

2. Compare and contrast Moses's experience at the burning bush with the experience of a man who decides to become a foreign missionary. Why should early attempts at reformation make harder the conditions to be reformed?

3. Discuss the origin and development of the Feast of the

Passover. Try to learn how the Jews in your community celebrate the feast. What elements of the feast are preserved in the Lord's Supper?

4. If you had been a witness of the crossing of the Red Sea, what would you have seen?

5. All the "spies" dealt with the same general facts. How do you account for the record that ten brought back an unfavorable report, while two urged immediate advance? Do you meet with a similar grouping of men, who inquire of the promised land of a cooperative commonwealth, a federation of the world?

6. Compare and contrast the "decalogues" of Exodus 34, Exodus 20, and Deut. 5. Would you expect to find among the primitive and "immoral" tribes of Africa much or little observance of ritual in religion?

7. Compare and contrast the Laws of Hammurabi with those of the Mosaic Code. Do you hold views of the Bible which make you afraid of possible "finds" of the archeologists or of other scientists?

8. If a man thought that his god had his seat upon a mountain, yet was present in or near a movable ark, would he have a higher or a lower idea of deity than the man who believed that his god dwelt exclusively near some shrine, some tree, well, or stone? Give reason for your answer.

CHAPTER IV

Conquest and Chaos

The Period of Joshua and the Judges

Introductory

When the desert tribes of Israel found themselves at last in Canaan, they stood face to face with a civilization already at least fifteen hundred years old. The Canaanites lived in cities with massive walls, were skilled and far-ranging merchants, who offered at once serious obstacles and seductive temptations to the hardy warriors of Israel.

Palestine was not a land of far distances. The territory within her usual limits was but "slightly larger than Vermont." There was little unoccupied land to welcome the invaders. Before the time of the Conquest, too, "a Mediterranean people called Philistines . . . had migrated from the island of Crete, to the sea plain at the southwest corner of Palestine. By 1100 B. C. these Philistines formed a highly civilized and warlike nation, or group of city-kingdoms."[1]

Our studies now will give us glimpses of the days in which, by slaughter or enslavement, the Israelites tried to find standing-room, elbow-room, in Canaan. We shall see that the would-be conquerors were often conquered; that local heroes won local victories; and that now and then the tribesmen heard the summons to wider conquest and to loftier faith.

I. VICTORIES AND VICTORS

Sixth Week, First Day.

1. Joshua and Jericho

Read rapidly Josh. Chapters 1 to 6, to get the atmosphere of

[1] Breasted, "Ancient Times," p. 203.

the book, and an appreciation of the personality of Israel's new leader.

The great adventure into the Land of Promise was left to Moses's successor. Joshua, soldier of Jehovah, is by no means so inspiring a character as Moses; but he is good to look upon. The record puts into his lips one speech well worthy of the man upon whom Moses had put his spirit. The speech brings before us three permanent, unescapable elements of life: Freedom, Service, Crisis.

> Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.—Josh. 24: 14, 15.

You are free, certainly, but free only to serve. You may serve the gods of the heathen round about; you may serve the gods beyond the River and in Egypt; you may serve Jehovah. Don't you want to serve? You will know then a fatal service.

"Last night my soul drove out to sea,
Down through the pagan gloom,
As chartless as eternity,
As dangerous as doom.

By blinding gusts of no-god chased,
My crazy craft plunged on;
I crept aloft in prayer to find
The light-house of the dawn.

No shore, no star, no sail ahead,
No lookout's saving song;
Death and the rest athwart my bow,
And all my reckoning wrong."

And this day is the day of choice. Why the haste? Are

there not more summers in the sky? Perhaps, but the new summers in the sky bring only dark, cold, dead winter to the heart.

We shall remember Joshua by that speech recorded of him; and repeat for ourselves its closing words: "As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."

The conquest of Canaan began with the capture of Jericho. The solemn march in silence around the city, day following day; the sharp and sudden shout, the sounding of the rams' horns, may well have deeply impressed the superstitious dwellers in Jericho.

> And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Jehovah. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Jehovah went on continually, and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and the rearward came after the ark of Jehovah, the priests blowing the trumpets as they went. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.—Josh. 6: 12-15.

Rahab may have bought the safety of her family at the price of treachery.

"That her [Jericho's] walls fell to the sound of Joshua's trumpets is no exaggeration, but the soberest summary of all her history. Judæa could never keep her. She fell to Northern Israel, till Northern Israel perished. She fell to Bacchides and the Syrians. She fell to Aristobulus. . . . She fell without a blow to Pompey; and at the approach of Herod and again of Vespasian her people deserted her. . . . Her people seem never to have been distinguished for bravery, and indeed in that climate how could they? It was impossible they could be warriors, or anything but irrigators, paddlers in water and soft earth. No great man was born in Jericho; no heroic deed was ever done in her. She has been called 'the key' and 'the guardhouse' of Judæa; she was only

the pantry. She never stood a siege, and her inhabitants were always running away."[2]

Sixth Week, Second Day.

2. The Conquest Incomplete

The pitilessness of the wars of conquest may be frankly admitted. The standards of the ancient warriors were not our standards, and yet some of the fighters of the twentieth century cannot afford to throw stones at their predecessors. The tales of destruction are relieved from loathsomeness, partly by the remembrance of the unspeakable rottenness of Canaanitish civilization, partly by the remembrance of the crude and barbaric idealism which made Israel's fight not merely a fight for territory, but a fight for the God of Israel. To the tribesmen of Israel the biggest cause was the victory of their God over the gods of Canaan. To their thought, Jehovah was the inspiration of all their warfare; to him they rendered thanks for victory; the spoils of war were his.

Naturally the stories of triumph and deliverance have been more carefully preserved than the stories of defeat. Once at least the victory was so complete that an ancient poem, quoted by the book of Joshua, declared that the sun and moon stood still till the long battle was won.[3]

> Then spake Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel,
>
> Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
> And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.
> And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
> Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.
>
> Is not this written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.—Josh. 10: 12, 13.

[2] G. A. Smith, "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," p. 267ff. (an important and stimulating book).

[3] How curious it is to remember that Luther said of Copernicus, "The fool will upset the whole science of astronomy. But as the Holy Scripture shows, Joshua commanded the sun, not the earth, to stand still."

The conquest of the land was far from complete. In the stories of the book of Judges and in those of I Samuel, we note evidences that the Canaanites and Philistines lived their own lives in the land, pursued their own religions, and were now and again the masters of Israel. A writer calls our attention to the fact that there was a zone of Canaanitish cities, which effectually separated southern Israel from the tribes of the north, and prevented therefore the unity of sentiment which would have promoted unity of national life.

3. Caleb, the Veteran

Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah spake unto Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God. And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake.—Josh. 14: 6-12.

The editor of the book of Joshua has rescued from the debris of the years the story of Caleb, one of the two spies who in the old days had brought back to Moses and the

vilderness wanderers a good report from the Promised Land.

"'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,
But the high faith that failed not by the way."

With the glorious, all-sufficing faith of the younger days, the aged man asks, not for an easy berth, not for a grant of land bestowed by a grateful people, but for one more hard job, he conquest of the hill country, held by the Anakim, whose cities are great and fortified. The story may be a tale growng out of the life of a clan rather than a man; but the request of the veteran thrills one as does the word of Tennyson's aged Ulysses to his comrades:

"My purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the paths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides: and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

The petty isolated offensive of Caleb gives us probably a air idea of the sporadic military operations of the Hebrews n the earlier days of their settlement in Canaan.

The achievement of Deborah is of exceptional importance, or it reveals an entente of some of the northern tribes, rophetic of actual national unification.

Sixth Week, Third Day.

4. Deborah, the Hebrew Jeanne d'Arc

Read Judges 5.

For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah.

Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto Jehovah;
I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
Jehovah, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel. . . .
Awake, awake, Deborah;
Awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak, and lead away thy captives, thou son of Abinoam. . . .
The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
They took no gain of money.
From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.

—Judges 5:2-5, 12, 19-21.

The Song of Deborah is one of the oldest war songs of literature. One must read it aloud to get the swing and the fire of it. The Canaanites are masters. The Hebrew peasants and travelers skulk in the bypaths, no shield or spear among forty thousand in Israel. Then, "I Deborah arose, I a mother in Israel." We can see the tribesmen gather to the conflict; Zebulun and Naphtali gamble with their lives on the high places of the field. Just over there, the men of Reuben sit on the ash-heaps of their villages, listening to the pipings for the flocks, talking, talking, everlastingly talking; over yonder Dan and Asher, having a good time by the sea; ships, cup-races, and all the rest! "Curse ye Meroz . . ." Why this hot attack upon this little town, of which today we have no trace, a town presumably made up of perfectly decent people, who cared for their families and paid their debts as well as most of us?

Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,
Because they came not to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah against the mighty.
—Judges 5:23.

But the stars fought from heaven, the ancient river Kishon swept away Israel's enemy.

The mother of Sisera peers through her lattice window: "Why is his chariot so long in coming?" But it will not come.[4]

"So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah."

Still divided, still mutually jealous, as were our thirteen colonies before the fires of the Revolution welded them together, the tribes of northern Israel were summoned by Deborah to national unity in the struggle for national triumph, "in the name of the religious ideal." The song, then, marks a distinct advance toward this unity of national life under the national protector, Jehovah.

With the victories of Gideon, we see still further progress toward national feeling and effort.

Sixth Week, Fourth Day.

5. The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon

Read Judges 6, 7, and 8, for portrait of Gideon, for the famous story of the Three Hundred, and for appreciation of social and religious conditions.

And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into

[4] Deborah jubilantly praises Jael for a breach of one of the earliest laws of hospitality. The killing of Sisera was the act of a chaotic and cruel age, which was only beginning to feel the touch of the law-abiding and loving God.

> the hand of Midian. And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, then show me a sign that it is thou that talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and lay it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.—Judges 6: 11-18.

At the time of harvest, nomads from the desert sweep over the fields of the tribesmen of Manasseh. Young Gideon is flailing his wheat—where? Not upon the open threshing floor, exposed to the wind—and to the enemy—but in a wine-press. He hears a divine voice, "Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon thinks to himself, "Mighty man of valor? That is certainly quite a title for the least in my father's house, of a family the poorest in Manasseh; for a man so frightened that he must beat out his wheat in a wine-press." But the voice comes to him again: "Surely I will be with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." The spirit of Jehovah clothes itself with Gideon (cf. Judges 6: 34, margin), and his three hundred men learn the battle cry, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." The cowards gone, the careless gone, Gideon's little band drives the Midianites back into the desert.

Says Morgan Gibbon:

"You know that large collection of errors, the multiplication table. It is as full of mistakes as it is of figures; but it contains no bigger mistake than this, that twice one is simply two, and that ten times one is ten. Nonsense! Twice one now is not simply two, but two plus their unity. Ten men working together, each man working heartily, what have you? You have ten times one man plus their unity, plus the enthusiasm born of cooperation, plus all the incalculable energies that are born only when heart is joined to heart and soul is joined to soul."

Gideon has been sometimes styled the first king of Israel. Such victories as his did much to confirm the faith of Israel in Israel's chosen deity, to intensify the national self-consciousness. A writer says:

> "To bleed for others' wrongs,
> In vindication of a cause, to draw
> The sword of the Lord and Gideon—oh, that seems
> The flower and top of life."

It is suggestive of the chaos of the times that the narrative soon swings away from Gideon, the astute and courageous vindicator of a cause, to Samson, the joking Hercules, who likes to tie foxes' tails together, and a firebrand to the joined tails, to burn the fields of his enemies, God's enemies.

This man is not interested to win "the flower and top of life." He will sleep awhile, and then go and shake himself as at other times, and think up some new riddles, some new deviltry.

Sixth Week, Fifth Day.

6. The Weak Giant

Read Judges 14 to 16 for character study, and for better understanding of the times.

The story of Samson has furnished much food for thought to the small boys of many centuries. On the housetops in the hours of leisure, Hebrew fathers would tell their children of the old days, when there was no king, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes, when Samson arose, the giant who was so strong that he could beat everything and everyone but himself, "stand everything but temptation." A child of prayer, by choice God's devotee, the young man finds complete satisfaction in exasperating the Philistines.

> And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged

him, that his soul was vexed unto death. And he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.

And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath told me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought the money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and shaved off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines are upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free. But he knew not that Jehovah was departed from him.—Judges 16: 15-20.

The question put to him by Delilah we often ask, for a better purpose, of the Samson-like man: "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth." In antiquity the hair was supposed to be a seat of strength; but it may be that with Samson, as with the other strong men of the world, the real seat of strength lay in the fact that he was God's man, God's friend. Let him dally with the Philistines, tell his secrets to the enemies of Jehovah, he may not know immediately that "Jehovah is departed from him"; he will grind in the prison house with slaves, "blind, blind, irrecoverably blind." In the gallery of memory, one may well hang a picture of the big, blind, blundering giant, whose hair has grown again, whose thought is of vengeance and of God; who feels cautiously for the pillars of the house, beneath and upon whose roof are crowds of his enemies and God's; who strengthens himself with one last prayer that in his death he may kill those who have defied his God.[5]

Samson is not to be thought of as a judge in the modern

[5] It is strange to consider that the town of Gaza, with its traditions of the old giant, now carrying off the city gates, now grinding in the city prison, has been in our own day (1917) the scene of fierce conflicts between Turkish and British armies.

sense of the term. He seems rather to have been a crude and boisterous "hero" of the time. His story well illustrates the prevalent social chaos, the frequent subjection of the Hebrew clansmen to their neighbors, and the strange mingling of devotion with unbridled passion and violence, which characterized the average Israelite.

II. THE WAYS OF RELIGION

Sixth Week, Sixth Day.

1. The Cruelty of Religion

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to Jehovah, the God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Of a truth I have sinned against Jehovah, the God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: when I saw among the spoil a goodly Babylonish mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel; and they laid them down before Jehovah. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the mantle, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them up unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? Jehovah shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones, unto this day; and Jehovah turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.—Josh. 7: 19-26.

Of the pitiless character of the early wars of conquest we have already spoken. The story of the Salem witchcraft

delusion is a little window through which we may look out upon the landscape of the law and life of our own forefathers; so the story of Achan opens out upon large ranges of the religious life of the Israelites in the early days of their experience in Canaan. In a moment of temptation a man stole a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment. He was stoned to death, all his family and all his cattle were destroyed, yes, and the very tent he dwelt in. Such was the solidarity of the family and such the sin of stealing from Jehovah the "devoted thing" that Jehovah's anger could be appeased only by the slaughter of the sinner and the destruction of all that might be dear to him. We shall see how Israel was extricated from the cruelty of this type of thought. But even as we note the cruelty, we are bound to note as well the passionate religious conviction lying behind the cruelty: "We are Jehovah's people. The defeat of Jehovah's people is not due to the strength of the enemy, but to treachery within the camp." Among the unthinking populace this conviction would become mere superstition: "God must prosper us, if we perform the ceremonies of his cult." Among the loftier souls of Israel, this passionate conviction would issue in the mastery of life through trustful surrender to Jehovah.

Another tragic illustration of the prevalent cruelty of religion is given us in the story of Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11:30ff.), to which reference has already been made (p. 50). A vow whose performance would violate every sentiment of humanity and fatherly love must be performed. It seems as if the thought of the Deuteronomic command were always in the minds of the early Hebrews: "That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed unto Jehovah thy God" (Deut. 23:23).

2. The Crudity of Religious Conceptions

Read Judges 17 and 18, which show that the early Hebrews were not lacking in humor, even if they were lacking in some of the finer graces.

In Judges 17 and 18 we have a delightfully humorous story, which gives us almost certainly the religious atmosphere which was breathed by the common people in the days of social chaos.[6]

A certain man, Micah, had stolen a considerable sum of money from his mother. Troubled by his mother's curse upon the unknown thief, he confessed. The lady was so delighted with her son's sudden honesty that she "took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and it was in the house of Micah." Micah at first installed one of his own sons as priest in his house of gods. But after a while, a young Levite, or theolog, if you will, as he searched for a "position," found his way to Micah's house. Micah made him his house-chaplain. Some raiding Danites—also Hebrews, it will be observed—carried off the several objects of worship. They also cheerfully suggested to the young chaplain: "Go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be priest unto the house of one man, or to be priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?" And the priest's heart was glad! A religion, this, which is by no means free from idolatry, which is ignorant or oblivious of the second commandment of the decalogue, a religion which finds still in the image "the focus of divine powers," a religion which has little to do with the higher ethics, either in priest or people. The Danites[7] raid a land because it is large and because the people are quiet and secure. They want the images because they want God to be with them in their plundering excursions. The priest goes with the robbers because they offer him a better job. A crude religion, but with the crudity of youth, which is better than the decay of senility.

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[6] "The nucleus of the story is evidently of great age, and the events it describes may be assigned with some confidence to the generation after the invasion of Joshua."—H. B. D. III, p. 358.

[7] The story may interest the compiler as explaining the origin of the sanctuary at Dan, one of the shrines most dangerous to the prophetic type of Jehovah worship.

Sixth Week, Seventh Day.

3. Compromise with the Canaanites

Not seldom the conquerors of a country have been themselves conquered by the culture of the country. The Canaanites, with their city kings, with their diplomacy and alliances, with their commerce and their caravans, with their vineyards and olive-yards, with their comparatively elaborate civilization, their society which was called high "though it had run low," introduced the desert tribes of the Hebrews to a new world of wide horizons and great temptations. The gods or baalim of the land were there before Jehovah. Was not Jehovah the god of the desert and the mountains, rather than of the valleys and the vineyards? In India today the Moslems will frequent Hindu festivals, and will adopt Hindu superstitions. At times the Hebrews worshiped the local baals as well as Jehovah. More often they assimilated Jehovah worship to the worship of the Canaanitish deities. Feasts and ceremonies of the "heathen" cult were carried over into the Hebrew worship. The shrines and symbols of local deities became the shrines and symbols of Jehovah.

Concluding Note

The period, then, portrayed with striking veracity by the book of Judges, with more of idealism by the book of Joshua, was one marked by the entrance of the Hebrews into Canaan, by their conquest of considerable sections of the country, and by their frequent battles for tribal or national existence. During this period, there was a growth of national self-consciousness, accompanied by an increasing conviction of the protection and power of Jehovah. There was indeed a popular syncretism, or amalgamation, of religions, in which the ordinary worshipers frequently lost the distinction between the God of the Hebrews and the gods of the land; yet Jehovah, the God of Sinai, was no longer a stranger and a sojourner in Canaan. In the worship of Jehovah there was much of cruelty and more of crudity, but

also much of movement toward loftier conceptions of God and of duty.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Characterize the religious equipment of Israel on entering Canaan.

2. Discuss the religious significance of the victories of Deborah and of Gideon.

3. How would the Hebrews have justified their destruction of their Canaanitish enemies?

4. Discuss the influence of Canaanitish forms of worship, and explain the religious compromises of the Hebrews. During much of its career as ruler, the old East India Company, while boasting of its neutrality, openly supported Hindu idolatry. Compare and contrast the position of the Company with that of the conquering Hebrews. Would you expect England today to be more largely influenced by the religions of India, or India to be more largely influenced by the religion of England?

5. Until recently the Chinese have inflicted punishment not only upon the criminal, but upon his family. Could you justify this custom? (Cf. the case of Achan.)

6. Discuss the popular religion of the days of the Judges, as suggested by the story of Micah.

7. Remembering that the book of Judges was to the Hebrews of the later years a kind of picture gallery through which they often walked, what do you think the average Hebrew boy would have gained from his reading of the stories of Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Micah?

CHAPTER V

Politics and Faith Nationalized

Samuel, Saul, David

Introductory

Seventh Week, First Day.

In our study thus far, we have seen the Children of Israel summoned from serfdom into the liberty and privation of the wilderness. We have observed their slow and partial achievement of national self-consciousness, through their common dangers and their common devotion to their God Jehovah.

In the Land of Promise they found, as we have seen, a comparatively high civilization. The very name Canaanite was to become another name for "merchant." It was to the temporary advantage of Israel that the Canaanites suffered from the lack of political unity. Palestine, with its coastlands, its valleys, its highlands, its striking differences in climate, tended to isolate rather than to unify social groups. The lack of political unity did not prevent the tremendous impact of the Canaanites upon their neighbors. The Philistines had gained territory from the Canaanites, but the Canaanites in turn gave laws, language, and religion to their conquerors. The imposing temples of Philistia were temples of the old Canaanitish deities; the rites of Philistine worship were the rites taught by the Canaanites. The gods which the Philistines took into battle against the Hebrews were gods long worshiped by the ancient people of the land. This experience of a strong and aggres-

sive people, who were to give their name (Philistine) to the whole land of Palestine, was an ominous portent for Israel. What could a few desert clans, with their outlandish worship, do against the ancient, established cults of the land? Surely it was most important for the invaders to keep peace with the gods of the invaded territory. Centuries later, when Assyria conquered northern Israel, the new settlers in the land were troubled by lions, and they "spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast carried away, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the law of the god of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the law of the god of the land" (II Kings 17:26).

As the Israelites gradually passed from the nomad to the agricultural life, how important was it for them to know the religious rites which would assure fertility to the land and abundance to the harvests! It is to be noted, moreover, that the Canaanitish worship was imposing and alluring. There were elaborate shrines with famous and ancient altars. Each shrine had its asherah—apparently a wooden post or mast—and its massebah, or sacred stone. Each shrine had its priest or priests, who performed their rites with passionate sincerity, gashing themselves with knives as they cried to their gods. Sacred prostitution was permitted and encouraged. Probably the most cherished deities were the local representatives of the goddess Astarte, the deity of fertility and reproduction. The baal of a town or region was the consort of the goddess. There were well-known oracles, soothsayers, and wizards, who could lift the veil of mystery which ever hung closely about the life of the Hebrew.

In this chapter, we study certain early experiences of the faith of Israel in the land of the baalim, and watch the swift rise of the Hebrew tribes to national unity under the leadership of Samuel the king-maker and of the first two kings of Israel.

1. The New Faith in Old Canaan

The period of conquest and chaos was almost inevitably a period of religious compromise. Jehovah naturally became the God of any bit of territory which his worshipers conquered—the baal, the possessor or lord of the land; but Jehovah might wisely be worshiped according to the old and well-tried rites of the Canaanites. As the Hebrews won more and more of the land, Jehovah entered the ancient shrines, as it were, by the front door, while the old faith lingered in the inner and most sacred recesses of the holy places. Breasted suggests that the Canaanites got their prominent noses from the Hittites, with whom they largely intermarried, and that "as the Hebrews intermarried with the Canaanites, they received enough Hittite blood to acquire the Hittite type of face." However this may be, it is certain that such intermarriages were very common. The "Mosaic" laws frequently and with good reason condemn these alliances. Women have always been the conservators of religion. It has been said of the women of India that they are enamored of their chains. A Canaanitish woman would not readily surrender the gods of her own country at the behest of a husband, with his worship of a "foreign" god; nor would she joyfully instruct her children in the ways of Jehovah.

The story of four centuries of Hebrew life is the story of the slow and painful extrication of Israel's faith from the serpent coils of the Canaanitish and kindred cults. Very brilliantly does George Adam Smith compare and contrast the story of the Philistines with that of Israel.

"Both Philistines and Hebrews were immigrants into the land for whose possession they fought through centuries. . . . Both absorbed the populations they found upon it. Both succeeded to the Canaanite civilization, and came under the fascination of the Canaanite religion. . . . Yet Israel survived, and the Philistine disappeared. Israel attained to a destiny, equalled in the history of mankind only by Greece and Rome, whereas all the fame of the Philistine lies in having served as a foil to the genius of the Hebrews, and

today his name against theirs is the symbol of impenetrableness and obscurantism."

Seventh Week, Second Day.

2. The Rise and Fall of Saul

Read rapidly I Sam. 1 to 8, noting especially the political conditions out of which the monarchy arose and the religious conditions, revealed by the stories of Eli, his sons, Hannah, and Samuel.

As we enter the books of Samuel, we find ourselves slowly emerging from the anarchy of the days of the book of the Judges. The Philistines of the maritime plain, strong in infantry and in chariots, had brought Israel very low; but here and there were people of the land, who, like Hannah, sought Jehovah with pure prayer and tried to rear their families in his fear. Hannah's son, Samuel, a man of God, who ministered at a high place in the land of Zuph (I Sam. 9:5), was one of those who felt the need of the hour. A young man, coming with his servant to inquire concerning certain strayed asses, was recognized by Samuel as the man whom God would choose for the kingship. Head and shoulders above the rest of the people, Saul commended himself to the seer not less by his modesty than by his stature.[1]

> Now Jehovah had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came, saying. To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority

[1] The narrative of I and II Sam. is made up of several different strata of very ancient material, much of which has been worked over by a writer who was supremely interested in the religious teaching of Israel's history. There are two almost complete narratives of the stories of Saul and Samuel and their relations to David. The two accounts of Saul's appointment as king differ in their incidents and in their attitude toward the kingship.

over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner? . . .

Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?—I Sam. 9: 15-21; 10: 1.

Saul soon showed himself worthy of leadership by his daring rescue of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead (I Sam. 11). Saul did not exercise a very effective rule over all the tribes; but his strength and audacity drew after him many men, "whose hearts God had touched" with the patriotism which is akin to religion. Successful warfare bound the people more closely to their king. "The enemy makes the nation."

The records reveal, however, the growing popularity of a young man of Judah, who won the beautiful and sacrificial friendship of Saul's son, and won at the same time the insane jealousy of Saul himself. The documents leave us in some uncertainty as to the course of David's early career; but they linger lovingly upon various incidents. Now we see David, the neglected shepherd boy, learning lessons of courage from the wild beasts, and lessons of harmony from the stars. Now we see him playing the harp before Saul to quiet "the evil spirit from Jehovah." Now we see him slaying the giant with the smooth stone from the brook, and teaching the young men of all time not to strive to strut around in Saul's armor. Now we hear the women singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Again we

see David avoiding the javelin of Saul; again swearing an oath of eternal friendship with Jonathan. The narratives dwell at length upon David's flight and outlawry in the days when he was chased as a partridge through the wilderness. We read of his strange sojourn in the court of the "heathen" Philistine king, Achish of Gath; of his marriage to the shrewd and gracious woman Abigail. But as our interest centers increasingly upon David, we must not forget the son of Saul, whose utter self-abnegation as a friend was matched by his dauntless heroism as a soldier. Nor may we forget, though we remember with a compassion too near neighbor to contempt, the last days of Saul.[2]

Seventh Week, Third Day.

And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel; and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,

[2] Main incidents in the career of Saul:
His interview with Samuel, and subsequent election as king. I Sam. 10.
His rescue of Jabesh-gilead. I Sam. 11.
His misguided oath which almost procured the death of Jonathan, and his failure to listen to the best voice he knew. I Sam. 14, 15.
His insane jealousy of David. I Sam. 18 to 23, 26.
His consultation with the witch of En-dor. I Sam. 28.
His battle and suicide on Mount Gilboa. I Sam. 31.

> and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.—I Sam. 15: 17-23.

Saul went out to battle against Israel's implacable enemy, the Amalekites. According to the narrative, Amalek had been "devoted" to absolute destruction, because, in the days of wilderness wandering long before, the robber tribe had peculiarly harassed the weary and beaten forces of Israel. Saul's campaign against Amalek was a success; but, moved perhaps by cupidity rather than by charity, Saul saved the king of the Amalekites and the best of the spoil. Samuel met Saul with words of condemnation and rejection. "And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal. . . . And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death" (I Sam. 15: 33, 35).

The old prophet had loved the brave and modest soldier king, and had probably rejoiced in his appointment and in his achievements. One document, indeed, expresses the thought that to Samuel the organization of the kingdom itself was an apostasy from Jehovah. Jehovah himself was to be the only king of Israel.

Whatever may have been Samuel's actual attitude toward the kingship, it is interesting to ask whether the rule of a king is an advance upon a so-called theocracy or rule of God. If Jehovah is the king of Israel, the problem at once arises: Who shall interpret the will of Jehovah? Who, indeed, but the prophet, the speaker for God? Now this is all very well, so long as the prophet is properly identified, and lives and prophesies correctly. But what if the prophet dies, and leaves two sons to abuse his holy office? When Jesus Christ is proclaimed king of Florence, how is Florence to know what Jesus Christ wills for the city? Surely Savonarola will interpret the will of the unseen, unheard Christ. But what if Savonarola misinterpret the will of Christ?

The thought that Israel should have no other king than

Jehovah may be the reflection of a later age, which had drunk deep of the bitterness of the rule of a despot.

The estrangement between Samuel and Saul led the prophet, not to abandon the monarchy in favor of a theocracy, but to seek and anoint a new candidate for the kingship, David.

Saul fought a series of battles against Israel's foremost enemy, the Philistines. At last "he gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa. . . . And when Saul inquired of Jehovah, Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim,[3] nor by prophets," the three ordinary means of supposedly divine communication. And now the night before the battle, we see Saul, in disguise, slipping away from the camp to visit a necromancer, that she may call up his old friend-enemy Samuel from the realm of the shades. It is all very pitiful. Saul got no comfort from his communion with the dead. He and his men went away in the night.

> Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was greatly distressed by reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armorbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armorbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it.—I Sam. 31: 1-4.

> And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son (and he bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jashar):
>
> Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
> How are the mighty fallen!
> Tell it not in Gath,
> Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;

[3] Probably the sacred lot.

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither fields of offerings:
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided:
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

—II Sam. 1:17-27.

The exquisite elegy attributed to David states the essential truth regarding Saul. He was the man for his time. He became a child of failure, because his God was not at the hot center of his life. It is probably suggestive that in the earliest days it was Saul's servant, not Saul himself, who knew about the man of God, of whom inquiry might be made regarding the lost asses. As Saul pushed God off to the periphery of his life, jealousy, fear, and superstition found lodgment at the center. As he disobeyed Samuel, he refused to listen to the best voice he knew, the voice of God's man. He contributed to the strength of the union between tribe and tribe; but he added little to the strength of the union between the tribes and their God. Upon his death, the domination of the Philistines was almost undisputed, while

his great armor hung a dedicated trophy in the temple of the Ashtaroth. But Saul did not wholly fail. "No one ever questioned but that the kingdom must continue; he had proved its value too well. . . . Saul died on Gilboa, but he made David possible."

How beautiful to dream of what might have been if David, the young harpist of the soldier king, had been able to speak to God and sing to Saul, as Browning conceives:

"Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So would'st thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

Saul never saw the Saviour's hand throw open the gates of new life to him. He heard the women sing in David's honor, saw his son superseded in the esteem of men, saw himself disowned by the nation's chief prophet, and heard his doom pronounced by the necromancies of a witch.

Seventh Week, Fourth Day.

3. David, His People and His God

Read rapidly II Sam. 1 to 7, studying the political sagacity

of David, the scope and limitations of his religion, and the prevalent type of worship, in early days of monarchy.

For seven years and six months David reigned over Judah only, holding his throne at Hebron, probably at the pleasure of the Philistines, and by a most uncertain tenure. Driven by despair, rather than desire, the northern tribes at last offered him their allegiance.

> And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither; thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and smite the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul. Wherefore they say, There are the blind and the lame; he cannot come into the house. And David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah, the God of hosts, was with him.—II Sam. 5:6-10.

The capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites was the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the Hebrews, and in the history of humanity. To realize this, we need but remind ourselves of the dramatic story of the city, its sieges, its destructions, its resurrections, its statesmen, patriots, saviours, its friends and enemies within and without; we need but remind ourselves of the days of Alexander, of Pompey, of the Crusaders; the days of Allenby,[4] and of the Zionist dreamers of the twentieth century.

David made the city his political capital, the seat of his

[4] General Allenby's proclamation to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in 1917 read: "Since your city is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the greatest religions of mankind, and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore do I make known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer of whatsoever form belonging to the great religions of mankind will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faiths they are sacred."

dynasty, the center, therefore, to which in times of emergency the thoughts of tribesmen far and near would hasten. Again, David made the city the ecclesiastical, and, in a sense, the religious capital of his people. The ark, which had been returned by the superstitious Philistines, but which for a long time had been in comparative obscurity, was brought by David with great rejoicing into Jerusalem. The ark again became the center of national religious thought. Priests were appointed to care for it. With lavish preparations David made ready for the building of the temple which should house the ark. A later psalmist voices the sober facts when he prays:

> Jehovah, remember for David
> All his affliction;
> How he sware unto Jehovah,
> And vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:
> Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
> Nor go up into my bed;
> I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
> Or slumber to mine eyelids;
> Until I find out a place for Jehovah,
> A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.
>
> —Psalm 132: 1-5.

Of all the men who have given humanity a new heart, David stands easily among the first. As a man's "life consists in relations," we may study some of the man's relationships:

Seventh Week, Fifth Day.

a. His foes.

David's first task as king was to make his kingdom secure against foes to the east and west and north. His campaigns were cruel enough. We read: "And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, and brought tribute" (II Sam. 8: 2). Repeated

victories knit more and more firmly the fabric of Israel's national life. Discords, occasions of friction, were not lacking; but the tribesmen knew that they were the people of David and of Jehovah.

b. His friends.

Very significant is the friendship between David and Hiram, King of Tyre. We are entering a new age, when as a nation Israel can make alliances with other peoples—a dangerous privilege.

David surrounded himself with a group of guards, some of whom were certainly Philistine mercenaries, who served like the "Swiss guards at European courts." Some of these men he bound to him by ties of friendship, beautiful and strong. At the most sorrowful crisis of David's career, when he was fleeing from his son Absalom, Ittai the Gittite, leader of six hundred men of Gath, spoke the generous word, matched by the generous deed: "As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will thy servant be" (II Sam. 15:21).

One of David's most remarkable traits was his power to make friends with men of noble type, friends whose love, alas, he did not always repay with loyalty (II Sam. 11:14-25, but see II Sam. 9:9-13).

The relation of David to Joab his general is of peculiar interest. Shrewd, able, unscrupulous, cruel, Joab had no hesitancy in killing men who stood in his own way, or in the way of his king. With cold-blooded officiousness, he thrust three darts through the heart of Absalom, as on the day of battle the young rebel hung helpless, caught in the branches of the oak; this though David had given express orders that no harm should befall his son (II Sam. 18:14). But by his complicity in David's plot against Uriah, Joab got a noose around David's neck. Whenever he chose, he pulled it tight. David might struggle and strangle, and pray for mercy; he did what Joab wanted him to do. Never till the day of his

death did David escape the noose which he himself had placed in Joab's hand.

c. His family.

Read rapidly II Sam. 14 to 19, to be reminded of Absalom's rebellion, and its sequel. Note David's defects and virtues, and any indications of the royal and popular religion.

> And, behold, the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, Tidings for my lord the king; for Jehovah hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is. And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!—II Sam. 18:31-33.

In a beautiful psalm we read, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Psalm 101:2).

It would have been well for David if he had made and fulfilled a like vow. He did not extricate himself from the Oriental bondage of polygamy and concubinage. Indeed, by his adultery he broke even the loose marital laws of his age. His treatment of his son Absalom was a singular exhibition of strength and of weakness. The rebellion of Absalom was the natural fruitage of the jealousies and intrigues of the king's family.

Seventh Week, Sixth Day.

d. His God.

Why then does history lavish praise upon the man? Why did prophets of subsequent ages look forward to a deliverer, whom they joyed to call the Son of David? When every discount is made, we must recognize in David a man to whom Jehovah was the central and the summit fact of life. An

evangelist asked a group of young men, "What's the biggest thing in your life?" The biggest thing in David's life was Jehovah, His worship and His will.

> Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish. Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.—I Sam. 26:8-12.

In the long days of early banishment and outlawry, believing himself to be the man of destiny, the man of God's own choosing, David steadfastly refused to lay hands on "Jehovah's anointed." Fierce, eager, vehement, he was patient to wait till God's hour for him should strike. The supreme aspiration of the man's life was that he might build a worthy sanctuary to his God.

He was cruel. In his vindictiveness, there was a truly Semitic tenacity. In our study of Joseph, we have already referred to the story of Shimei, the blackguard of the house of Saul. David seemed to forgive the man who in the day of mortal agony had thrown dust in the air and cursed the king. But the record has it that on his very deathbed, the aged David remembered his enemy and bequeathed vengeance to his son (I Kings 2:8, 9). But even at this point, he was obeying not alone a law of custom, but the moral code dictated by the popular faith.

As David sought to do God's will, his obedience became

"the organ of spiritual knowledge," knowledge imperfect but actual. Three incidents may serve us:

First, a story of the troublous days of Saul's jealousy which has been rightly recorded by Charlotte M. Yonge in her "Book of Golden Deeds."

> And three of the thirty chief men went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto Jehovah. And he said, Be it far from me, O Jehovah, that I should do this: shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.—II Sam. 23: 13-17.

It was Palestine's dry, hot season. David was surrounded by his rude soldiery, at any time exposed to attack. "Oh, that one would give me to drink of the well of Bethlehem by the gate!" What did David want? A cup of H^2O? No, but that which the water symbolized—the coolness, the refreshment, the balm of the life and the loves of his boyhood. Three mighty men heard the wish of their chief. His wish was their command. "And the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem." But the three mighty men made their way to the well of Bethlehem by the gate, again broke through the Philistine guard, and brought the water to David. The water had become too precious to drink. Surely water won at the price of blood must have worth in the eyes of God himself. Reverently David poured out the water as a libation unto Jehovah. Thus early did this one man at any rate learn that self-forgetful knightly service for man has value in the sight of God. The man who has

learned that has passed from the religion of ritual into the religion of life, and is not far from the kingdom of Jesus.

The second illustrative incident is the interview of David with Nathan the prophet.

> And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.
>
> And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah.—II Sam. 12: 1-13.

In shameless fashion, the king had defied the laws of reverence for "property," for purity, for friendship, for life. One has well contrasted the rugged, loving, courageous David of the cave of Adullam with the soft and sensual David, who has arrived and has leisure to cherish thoughts of lust and murder. But when Nathan pictured David's sin, and denounced him with the word, "Thou art the man," the king made no attempt to "keep face," but in utter penitence confessed: "I have sinned against Jehovah." At that season, if not earlier, David saw that each new wrong done to man is "one more insult to God."

Nor may we overlook one of the striking incidents in connection with the flight of David from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion. His friends of the sanctuary brought out of the city the ark of the covenant of God, but the king said: "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation" (II Sam. 15:25). Was not the ark the real dwelling-place of Jehovah? Did not the presence of the ark assure the presence of Jehovah, and therefore the victory of the possessor of the ark? If Absalom could bear the ark of Jehovah to battle, could his forces possibly be whipped, could justice really triumph? But in the hour of his agony, David rose far above the thoughts of the men of his day. He knew that the God he loved was not imprisoned in the ark or near it. He knew that Jehovah was as strong to help him when he climbed wearily up the Mount of Olives, as when he worshiped before the ark in the sanctuary of Jerusalem (II Sam. 15:24-29).

Consistent in his thinking? No. Persistent in his fidelity to his God? No. Yet David helped his age, and helps us to finer faith, as does

> "The catholic man, who hath mightily won
> God out of knowledge, and good out of infinite pain,
> And sight out of blindness, and purity out of a stain."[5]

[5] Main incidents of David's career, as gathered from various documents: His summons from the sheepfold by Samuel. I Sam. 16.

Seventh Week, Seventh Day.

Concluding Note

The life of Samuel began in a period of civic confusion and degradation. While the Canaanites had been annihilated, or subdued, the Philistines of the coast dominated much of Israel's territory. They had their officials and their guards at convenient posts, to gather tribute and to watch for evidences of impertinent independence. They rejoiced in the disunity of the Hebrew tribes.

When David's life closed, the kingdom of Israel was a fact which surrounding nations must reckon with. The tribes were reasonably united. The people of the north were jealous of the primacy of Judah; but the shrewdness and ability of David and the increasing glory of his capital city silenced objectors. The Philistines were friendly, possibly having enough to do to hold their own against inroads from Egypt. A league of friendship existed between the new kingdom and the prosperous mercantile kingdom of Tyre.

When Samuel's work began, the religion and morals of the Hebrews were at low ebb. The civilization and culture of Canaan had begun their work. Jehovah had indeed, in the thought of the multitude, supplanted the baalim of such territory as had been conquered; but Jehovah, now the supreme baal or lord, must be worshiped in a way harmonious with the religious fashions approved by the past. Thus a most dangerous amalgamation of faiths resulted. For

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His victory over Goliath. I Sam. 17.
His friendship with Jonathan. I Sam. 18, 20.
His persecution at the hands of Saul. I Sam. 19 to 24, 26.
His relations with Nabal and Abigail. I Sam. 25.
His life among the Philistines. I Sam. 27, 29.
His appointment as king of Judah. II Sam. 2.
His kingship over all Israel. II Sam. 3 to 5:5.
His capture of Zion. II Sam. 5:6ff.
His victories. II Sam. 5, 7, 8, 10.
His plans for the ark and the temple. II Sam. 6 and 7.
His sin against Uriah. II Sam. 11 and 12.
His experiences and activities at the time of Absalom's rebellion. II Sam. 15 to 19.
His selection of Solomon as his successor. I Kings 1:28ff.

Hebrew and for Philistine, the ark was both symbol and seat of deity. When Eli saw the lips of Hannah move in prayer he had no better explanation than that she was drunk with wine. Worship at Jehovah's altar ministered to ecclesiastical greed and graft.

Did the days of Saul and David witness any important moral and religious uplift? At first, it would seem that there was little advance. David to the last appears to be a worshiper of Jehovah whose worship is consistent with cruelty. But the period was, after all, characterized by great achievements in the realm of religion and morals. Jerusalem was regarded as one of the oldest seats of the religion of Jehovah. Upon Mount Moriah Abraham had won his triumph of faith. The increasing importance of Jerusalem tended to diminish the importance of local shrines, which were ever tempting their votaries to immoral rites and immoral lives.

Again, David's undivided devotion to Jehovah had a powerful influence upon his contemporaries. He was Jehovah's king, Jehovah's warrior. Every friendship he cemented by a covenant of Jehovah. Every military success he won for the greater glory of Jehovah. And David's character, while far from stainless, tended, as both warning and example, to purify the morals of the people.

We have thus studied one of the most significant periods of Israel's history.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. How would you explain the fact that the Philistines perished, while the Hebrews survived to become benefactors of humanity? Consider in your answer the geographical situation of each people and its relative political, economic, and religious assets.

2. Characterize the worship of Jehovah at Shiloh in the early days of Samuel.

3. Would you regard the institution of the kingship as marking a civic advance or decline?

4. Characterize briefly Saul, David, and Jonathan.

5. State briefly the political, ethical, and religious achievements of Israel in the days of Samuel, Saul, and David.

6. In what sense does the enemy make the nation?

7. If you had the power to nominate a certainly successful candidate for the presidency, would you choose an irreligious man of transcendent ability and patriotism, or a religious man of equal patriotism, but more modest ability? Justify your answer.

8. Do you think it would have been better for David to drink the water brought to him at the cost of grievous sacrifice? Why or why not?

9. William Blake writes:

> "I will not cease from mental fight,
> Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land."

What ideal does the poet cherish? Who or what would be his foes in his mental fight?

CHAPTER VI

Prosperity, Despotism, and Disintegration

Solomon, Rehoboam, and Jeroboam I.

Introductory

Eighth Week, First Day.

For centuries after the conquest of Canaan, the life and religion of the Canaanites profoundly influenced the Hebrews. The book of Judges makes it clear that the annihilation of the earlier population (Josh. 10:40) was slow and partial. In the local shrines of Israel there were many remnants of idolatry. As Jehovah supplanted a local baal, he assumed, to the popular mind, the aspects of that baal. "Many a town of Italy at the present day would not for a moment identify its particular madonna with the virgin of any other town." In the petty shrines, as well as in the central sanctuary, there were probably arks, which were held very sacred, and were employed in divination.[1]

But as Jehovah took over the rights and privileges of one conquered baal and another, there was a distinct advance of thought. "With one deity gathering to himself the attributes of all other personifications of natural powers, the tendency inevitably sets in to dissociate Yahwe from any particular personification." The exaltation of Jerusalem, of its ark and sanctuary, did much to further a truer conception of God. The capital became increasingly the magnet of thought and

[1] W. R. Arnold, "Ephod and Ark."

the object of pilgrimage. Thus, even to the ignorant devotees of the countryside, the local shrines and representations of Jehovah lost their supremacy. The unification of the nation under David, too, fostered the conception of the one great God, ruler, protector, champion of all the Hebrews.

Our present chapter, while brief, is very important, as it covers the period in which the united kingdom flourished and fell; the period in which was built the temple, upon whose foundations should rest Israel's greatest joys and hopes and loves.

1. The Strength and the Weakness of Solomon

Read rapidly I Kings 3 to 8 to become better acquainted with the book, and to appreciate the importance of the temple in the thought of the Hebrews. Note especially "Solomon's Prayer."

The building of the temple was a task of sovereign importance to statecraft and religion. To this task, David's son Solomon set himself with utter devotion and with complete success.

> In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of Jehovah laid, in the month Ziv. And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.—I Kings 6: 37, 38.

In his great undertaking he won the cooperation of Hiram, King of Tyre.

The writer of I Kings 8 puts into the lips of Solomon a prayer of dedication, which is one of the noblest expressions of Hebrew religion.

The completion of the temple was but one evidence of the growing prosperity of the state. Commerce flourished; trade-routes to north and south were guarded and controlled to the advantage of Israel. For the first time the Hebrews

joined in enterprises which carried them in merchant vessels to foreign ports.

> And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.—I Kings 9:26-28.

It has been said of Solomon that he maintained by diplomacy what his father had won by the sword. But the practical democracy of David's day was being transformed into a typical Oriental despotism. Forced labor, the corvee, was established (I Kings 9:20-22. Cf. I Kings 5:13-18). So harsh was the control of this forced labor that shortly after Solomon's death the man in charge of the levy was stoned to death by his victims (I Kings 12:18). The land itself was apparently divided without regard to the old tribal boundaries, for the purpose of taxation, that ample luxuries might flow to the king's table.

Still more significant for our purpose is the fact that the increasing commercial interests of the country led to foreign alliances, and these in turn to foreign marriages. According to the book of Kings, the Pharaoh himself gave his daughter to Solomon in marriage. Other foreign wives were added to the king's harem. The foreign wives must bring with them their fathers' gods. Traders from other nations must have in Jerusalem their own shrines. With grandiose and ill-timed hospitality, Solomon welcomed and housed the deities of other lands; "and his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God." The record has it that Solomon himself was carried away into polytheism.

> And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods;

and his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and went not fully after Jehovah, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.—I Kings 11: 3-8.

Actual heathen worship in high quarters must have corrupted the religion and the priesthood of Jehovah at the heart. It is an extraordinary fact that the places of "heathen" worship built by Solomon remained practically undisturbed in Jerusalem for three hundred years, until at last they were destroyed by the reforming zeal of Josiah.

And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the pillars, and cut down the Asherim, and filled their places with the bones of men.—II Kings 23: 13, 14.

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all the nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of birds, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.—I Kings 4: 29-34.

Posterity extolled the wisdom of the temple-builder, but it is probable that the wisdom, at any rate of his later years, was rather the shrewdness of the keen observer, who makes epigrams, writes proverbs, lives "near the church, far from God." His despotic regime sowed the seeds of disruption and corruption in civic and religious life. Had Solomon's successor been endowed with common sense rather than royal idiocy, he might have built upon Solomon's foundations of empire a glorious superstructure. As it was, the "Golden Age" of Solomon paved the way for the ruin of the state.

Eighth Week, Second Day.

2. Rehoboam's Folly: Northern Israel's Revolt

Read I Kings 12, the narrative of the king who ought to have prayed, "God be merciful to me, a fool!"

> And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
>
> And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.—I Kings 12: 13-17.

In the days of David, the tribes had been held together with difficulty. It was an easy thing for a Benjamite to blow his trumpet, and draw after him numbers of the northern clans by the simple announcement, "We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: Every man

to his tents, O Israel." David's swiftness of mind and Joab's swiftness of action had doubtless saved the kingdom at that time (II Sam. 20). Solomon had suppressed rather than cured tendencies to revolt. Upon his death, representatives of the northern tribes, headed by Jeroboam, asked of the new king Rehoboam that he make less grievous the yoke put upon them by his father. Rejecting the advice of the elder statesmen of the realm, the young fop consulted his dear familiar friends, and "answered the people roughly."

Speaking of the Great War, and its beginning, a writer says: "Then came the 28th of June. A man and woman were struck down in a hill town of Bosnia. It was the pistol shot which started the race for Hell. Events tumbled one another down like ninepins . . . and in the opening days of August, men by the million were marched to slaughter." Rehoboam played his part on a much smaller stage than the assassin of Sarajevo, but his rough answer set events tumbling one another down. A king who could have better played the role of court fool changed the course of the religious history of the world.

It has been said that the American War for Independence was not a revolution; it was resistance to revolution. George III had been seeking to revolutionize the English system of government, and our fathers resisted. Jeroboam's rebellion was resistance to revolution, or at most, a "conservative revolution," due to the despotism of Solomon, which had torn the ancient privileges of freemen from the Israelites of the north, a despotism now to be accentuated by Rehoboam.

From this time on for two centuries the ten northern tribes, known as the Kingdom of Israel, pursued their own life, now opposed, now allied to the Kingdom of Judah in the south. Judah "seems to have consisted simply of the tribe of Judah with very little of Benjamin." The Southern Kingdom "held not over half the territory of her northern neighbor, and about one fourth of the arable land."

But we need not spend too much pity upon little Judah. She had certain great assets, which writers have noted:

a. She had a reasonably homogeneous population, and a country well guarded by mountain and desert barriers from the inroads of invaders. On the other hand, the fertile plains of northern Israel were a standing invitation to ruthless nomad hordes, to arrogant Syrian neighbors, and, later, to the monstrous forces of Assyria; a standing invitation as well to the more dangerous because more seductive heathen cults.

b. Judah had "a persistent Davidic dynasty," which soon began to gather about itself great memories and greater hopes.

c. Most important of all, she had Jerusalem, the old political and religious capital of all Israel, where were the throne of David and the throne of deity, the sacred ark, the temple, "the place of the soles of Jehovah's feet."

Our studies call us for a time to the Northern Kingdom.

Eighth Week, Third Day.

3. The Northern Kingdom: Jeroboam's Fateful Decision

Read I Kings 12:25-14:16, for the story of Jeroboam, and the prophetic attitude toward him.

> And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in

> Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places that he had made. And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense.—I Kings 12: 26-33.

No one could realize more keenly than the able soldier and ruler Jeroboam the handicaps of his infant kingdom. Infancy, whether that of persons or kingdoms, has always been counted "an extra-hazardous occupation." His reasoning seems to have been as follows: "I will try to make my people forget Jerusalem by glorifying the shrines of Bethel and of Dan. Are not these sanctuaries anciently dear to my people? Nay, are there not stories of Abraham and Jacob themselves which make the sanctuary of Bethel more sacred even than that of Jerusalem? Then to make the worship of Jehovah at once concrete and natural, I will establish or magnify altars on which are the representations of Jehovah in the semblance of a bull calf." Jeroboam did not propose to supplant Jehovah worship by Baal worship; far from that. We must never lose sight of the fact that Jeroboam was to the last a worshiper of Jehovah.

As you kneel down to pray to your God, have you never found it almost impossible to concentrate your mind upon your worship? Have you never almost envied the churches of other creeds, in which images of Christ and of the Madonna woo the undivided attention of the worshipers? How hard it is to make real to one's self the invisible God! What more natural than that this man Jeroboam, with his great problem of statesmanship, should attempt to solve it by making God seem real to His people by a tangible symbol! We must remember, too, that Jeroboam in his offer of images to his people was by no means an innovator. We have seen images in use from the earliest days. The story of Jacob speaks of teraphim; in the days of the Judges images were used without offense in Jehovah worship. When David at-

tempted to escape from Saul, his wife "Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair at the head thereof, and covered it with the clothes. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick" (I Sam. 19:13, 14). In Jeroboam's own day and for nearly two centuries longer, in Jerusalem itself the brazen serpent received homage and the odors of sacrificial incense (II Kings 18:4). If Jeroboam chose to symbolize Jehovah by the image of a calf, why complain?

His decision was perilous.

a. The moment one seeks to symbolize deity, that moment deity is limited, cheapened, degraded. The degradation becomes debasement when the symbol is so gross as that which Jeroboam chose.

b. The popular tendency of worship by means of the image is to become actual image worship. The Hindus who have been influenced by Christianity will tell you that the images of India are but media of worship-apparatus, if you will. But the ordinary worshiper adores the deity who has been called down into the idol, who sees through the idol's eyes, and lives within the idol's form, and is practically identified with the idol.[2] Jehovah worshiped by means of an image becomes imprisoned, localized in or near the image, is essentially identified with the image. The common people would worship inevitably the Jehovah of Dan, the Jehovah of Bethel, or the Jehovah of some other popular high place, practicing the cult of "polyjahvism."

c. A man becomes like the god he worships. If a man worships the image of a beast, he becomes beastly.

d. But we have only partially explained the execrations which all prophetic writers after Jeroboam heaped upon his memory. We have said that the story of the Hebrews

[2] "The one great broad fact to be clearly grasped is that to the Hindu each idol is a living personal god. The image has been made by human hands, but the god lives in it, using the stone or metal body as the human soul uses the human body.... He listens to their prayers and answers them. He hears and speaks, eats and sleeps, moves and acts.... The villager goes to the temple 'to see Kali's face.' He believes he looks into her own divine eyes."—J. N. Farquhar, "The Crown of Hinduism," p. 317.

for centuries is the story of their slow extrication from the serpent coils of the Canaanitish worship.. Now the baalim of the ancient faith of the land were frequently represented by images of the bull. The worship was a nature worship, sensual, obscene, cruel. Ever since the conquest, the most serious danger to Hebrew faith, and to the kingdom of God, was the seduction of this cult. Let Israel adore Jehovah by means of a symbol identical with the symbol of Canaanitish worship and Israel's God will soon be assimilated to the character of the baalim, confused in thought with them.

All too soon, the priests who ministered at the polluted altars of Bethel and Dan became themselves polluted, and the one thing in Israel which had "survival value" was in danger of death.

Concluding Note

The brevity of this chapter should not lose to us the sense of the pivotal character of the events discussed. Had David's united kingdom been strengthened by two statesmanlike successors of David, it might have maintained itself as an independent kingdom for many years. Solomon was like one of Shakespeare's "little wanton boys that swim on bladders," but venture far beyond their depth. His high-blown pride at length broke under him.

In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak or Sheshonk of Egypt invaded Palestine; he came up against Jerusalem:

> And he took away the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. And king Rehoboam made in their stead shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. And it was so, that, as oft as the king went into the house of Jehovah, the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber.—I Kings 14: 26-28.

It is all highly characteristic. So long as the king can make a proper show, it matters little whether the shields are gold

or brass. With faded gentility he still goes up to the house of Jehovah and prays for the welfare of the kingdom, which he has brought to ruin.

And yet this cheap and tawdry degenerate perhaps did not do more to nullify the work of Samuel and David than did Jeroboam, the leader of the northern tribes. Consulting the apparent interests of his kingdom, appreciating the importance of religion, missing the meaning of Israel's career and destiny, Jeroboam, the shrewd and patriotic ruler, became known in subsequent generations as "the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin." It will be our task to trace the streams which flowed, in Judah, from the folly of Rehoboam; in Israel, from the worldly wisdom of Jeroboam.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What advance in religious thought would you expect the Hebrews to make, as they extended their conquests in Canaan?

2. What facts give special significance to the building of Solomon's temple?

3. How far would you regard increase of commerce and international intercourse as evidence of a nation's "success"?

4. Why were Solomon's foreign marriages specially dangerous to the religious life of Israel?

5. Does the attitude of Solomon with reference to foreign gods suggest to you the true method of combining tolerance with loyalty? If you were an English ruler in Egypt, among a Moslem people, would you observe Friday or Sunday as the official day of rest? Would you or would you not contribute to the maintenance of Moslem places of worship?

6. What was the cause of the final break between the Northern and the Southern Kingdom?

7. With special care compare and contrast Judah and Israel from the standpoint of geography, government, and religion.

8. Is there anything wrong in the use of images in worship? If so, what? If not, why? It is said that a prominent

preacher in his private prayer places before him an empty chair, in which he imagines Jesus Christ to be seated. Would you regard this as a modern substitute for Jeroboam's use of images or is it different? Point out Canaanitish perils to the Hebrew faith, accentuated by Jeroboam's sanctuaries.

CHAPTER VII

Conflicts and Alliances with Foreign Nations and Foreign Gods

A Century and a Half of the Divided Kingdom

Introductory

Eighth Week, Fourth Day.

Before a universal history could be conceived, says a writer, two ideas must take shape in the minds of men: first, the idea of the unity of the human race; second, the hope of a concerted movement toward a definite goal. "These two ideas blazed up in early Hebrew literature much earlier than elsewhere in the history of man."[1] The earliest documents of the book of Genesis give us the thought of the unity of the race, although we shall see that some of the Old Testament writers sadly forget the thought. All of the biblical historians are more or less conscious of a movement toward a definite goal, a divinely guided movement, with which men may cooperate to their blessedness, against which they may fight to their ruin. To these narrators, the history of Israel is strictly "His Story," the story of Jehovah's dealings with his people. Israel is Jehovah's instrument for the accomplishment of his will. One must admire the moral courage and religious confidence of the historians, who, after setting down the record of the buoyant, youthful, hopeful days of David, could set down as well the ghastly facts which

[1] Adalbert Merx, quoted in *Homiletic Review*.

we have just studied: the disintegration of David's kingdom; the divorce of all the northern tribes from David's capital; the demoralization of northern Israel through acquiescence in Canaanitish forms of worship.

In our present chapter, we shall follow these religious historians as they make record of the national life of northern Israel and of Judah for a period longer than that between the Revolutionary War of America and America's entrance into the Great War. A complete account of the events of a century and a half in both kingdoms would be unendurably tedious. The dominant religious interest of the narrators controlled their selection of events.

I. THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

1. Omri, Defender of Israel

Read I Kings 16:8-28 for description of northern Israel's early days of civil strife.

> In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, and reigned twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver; and he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill, Samaria. And Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and dealt wickedly above all that were before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sins wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger with their vanities. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria; and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.—I Kings 16: 23-28.

Stories of conspiracy, drunken bouts, and murder succeed the narrative of Jeroboam.[2] But in 887 B. C. a military genius,

[2] Jeroboam's son, Nadab, was assassinated, and Baasha the leader of the conspiracy became king (I Kings 15: 25–28). Elah, the son of Baasha, was

Omri, founded a short-lived dynasty in the Northern Kingdom.

Consider Omri's task:

a. His accession to the throne was an incident of civil war, which did not end with his enthronement. "Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni, the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned" (I Kings 16:21, 22).

b. He had to keep watch and ward continually against his jealous kinsmen to the south, the Kingdom of Judah.

c. He had enemies to the east to be subdued. How well he succeeded is indicated by the famous Moabite stone, discovered in 1868. This stone, "a slab of black basalt, six inches high by two feet wide," was at once recognized by its discoverer to be of great interest and value; but the zeal of the explorer "aroused the suspicions and cupidity of the native Arabs, who imagined that they were about to be deprived of a valuable talisman, and consequently seized and partly destroyed it." Happily, squeezes had been made of the stone. Many fragments were recovered, and placed in the Louvre at Paris. The stone describes the victories of Mesha, king of Moab, who lived in the days of Omri's son. Among other significant sentences are these: "Omri king of Israel afflicted Moab for many days because Chemosh [the god of Moab] was angry with his land. Omri took possession of the land of Mehedeba, and it [Israel] dwelt therein during his days and half his son's days, forty years; but Chemosh restored it in my days."

d. To the north, Omri faced the strong and hostile forces of Syria. Damascus, the capital of the kingdom of that

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"drinking himself drunk," and one of his servants "Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him" (I Kings 16:9, 10). Zimri reigned seven days. Omri proceeded to dethrone him, but Zimri "perished in the ashes of the royal palace, to which he had himself set fire."

name, must very early have risen to commercial and political importance. Muhammad in his day feared that after seeing Damascus he would not care for Paradise. Even down to our own time the ancient city has retained something of its old primacy. Omri was forced to come to the best possible terms with the rulers of Damascus, who compelled him to make streets in his new capital for Syrian merchants (I Kings 20:34). But it is not likely that the Syrians seriously oppressed Omri, for both Syria and Israel were to face a new foe who was to make all local enmities seem trifles less than light. That foe was Assyria.

e. Just about the time that Omri came to the throne one of Assyria's greatest rulers began his reign (885 B. C.). Asshurnazirpal "firmly established the rule of Assyria in the northwest and the north, while he extended his empire eastwards, and laid the foundations of Assyria's later supremacy in the west on the coast of the Mediterranean." When any ruler chose to oppose the Assyrian or rebel against him, his city was captured, he himself was likely to be flayed, and his skin to adorn the fortress walls of Nineveh. The victor's inscriptions reek with blood. The world has had to wait till the twentieth century of the Christian era to read, this time in the records of Armenian massacres, stories of such unspeakable cruelty. News of the Assyrian spread swiftly. For the time Damascus and Israel escaped devastation. But Omri's diplomacy must now sweep his little kingdom into the bloody current of world politics.

Of Omri's task, the scriptural narrative suggests little. It dwells upon two facts:

a. Omri's building of a new capital, Samaria. "Commanding the roads from Shechem southwards to Esdraelon, and westwards to the coast, and situated within easy reach of the Mediterranean, no better site could have been selected for the fortified capital of the Northern Kingdom." Through the succeeding decades Samaria surpassed Jerusalem in political importance.

b. Omri's continuance in the sin of Jeroboam. He "walked

in all the way of Jeroboam . . . and in his sins wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger with their vanities." Omri was probably unconscious of any wrongdoing. He was a fighter rather than a thinker, a diplomat rather than a devotee. His God was "the God of things as they are," and the convenient shrines of Bethel and of Dan satisfied, while they demoralized, the religious instincts of the people.

Eighth Week, Fifth Day.

2. Ahab's International Problems and Policy

Read all of I Kings 20 for prophetic attitude toward Ahab's diplomacy.

Omri left to his son Ahab no easy task. Whether one looked southward, eastward, or northward, the horizon was dark. Fearing absorption by Syria, or annihilation by Assyria, Ahab proceeded to make alliances as he could. Judah for the time forgot her grievances. Ethbaal, king of "the Sidonians" (probably priest of Astarte), leagued himself with Ahab, and gave to him his daughter, the brave and notorious queen, Jezebel.

Ahab apparently needed all the alliances his diplomacy could procure.

> And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together; and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and fought against it.—I Kings 20: 1.

Ahab consented to the Syrian's first demands, but rejected further and more insulting proposals. His message to Ben-hadad has become proverbial: "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off" (verse 11). The forces of the drunken Syrian boaster were overwhelmed; but the pedants of the court of Damascus had a ready explanation of the defeat: "Their god is a god of the hills . . . let us fight against them in the plain, and surely

we shall be stronger than they" (verse 23). But Israel was again victorious. Ben-hadad's servants "said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings" (Query: How far did their worship of Jehovah influence their attitude toward men?): "let us, we pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life" (verse 31). The inscriptions of Semitic conquerors enable us to picture the scene. Ben-hadad, the great king, with his erstwhile revelers and fellow-drunkards, now adorned with sackcloth and ropes, moving as in solemn procession, caught eagerly the words, "Ben-hadad . . . brother." Those royal words of Ahab meant life. Soon the two "brothers" were riding in Ahab's chariot, and figuring out the terms of a treaty agreeable "all around." To "the sons of the prophets," this act of kingly mercy seemed weakness, infamous and intolerable. How shall we account for it? The answer may be given in one word, "Assyria."

As has been suggested, the outstanding fact of the ninth and eighth centuries is Assyria. And the Assyrians, with their power and their cruelty, their voracity and remorselessness, dictated the policy of every little nation within the sweep of their mighty arms. It was no time for petty quarrels, no time for killing a man who might soon join the king of Israel as a victim of an Assyrian "triumph." So Ahab may have thought. The immediacy of Ahab's peril is suggested by the Assyrian inscription, which describes the campaign of Shalmaneser II in 854 B. C. From the long inscription we select a few sentences:

"From Argana I departed, to Qarqar (Karkar) I approached; Qarqar his royal city I wasted, destroyed, burned with fire. One thousand two hundred chariots, 1,200 saddle-horses, 20,000 men of Dadda-idri (that is, Ben-hadad II?), of Damascus; . . . 2,000 chariots, 10,000 men of Ahab the Israelite . . . these twelve kings he took to his assistance; to make battle and war against me they came. . . . Fourteen thousand of their warriors I slew with arms; like Adad I rained a deluge upon them, I strewed hither and yon their

bodies . . . to kill themselves a great mass fled to their graves."[3]

In the days of Omri most of the little nations to the west of Assyria had purchased safety by tribute. Ahab tried the method of alliance[4] and battle. The inscription loudly proclaims the great slaughter of Shalmaneser's enemies, but nowhere does it mention captives or tribute. Ahab and his confederates were not wholly crushed. The inscription is profoundly significant, as the first indication that Ahab's little kingdom now hurled itself in actual battle against the mighty empire of Assyria.

In I Kings 22 we find Ahab again fighting against Syria, this time in league with Judah. Ahab disguised himself so that he might not be singled out and slain by the enemy. A Syrian soldier drew his bow at a venture and killed him.

But we turn back in the story to consider the aspects of Ahab's career which claim the chief interest of the biblical record.

Eighth Week, Sixth Day.

3. Ahab and Jezebel

> And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made the Asherah; and Ahab did yet more to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. —I Kings 16: 31-33.
>
> But there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.—I Kings 21: 25.

[3] R. W. Rogers, "History of Babylonia and Assyria" (an important book, usually obtainable from public libraries).

[4] Some writers think of Ahab as compulsory confederate of Damascus.

The problems of international policy and of "national self-preservation" were of little intrinsic concern to the writers of the books of Kings. To them, diplomatic success spelled defeat if it diverted king and people from exclusive devotion to Jehovah. In the daughter of the priest-king, Ahab found a wife who joined immense influence with utter indifference to morals and complete devotion to her own gods. Soon Ahab was building a "house of Baal" and an "altar of Baal," and was supporting a horde of priests of Baal. He evidently counted himself a worshiper of Jehovah. He gave his children names compounded with the name Jehovah. According to the record, however, Ahab went so far as personally to worship at the heathen altar (I Kings 16:31). No ruler of Ahab's time, outside of Palestine, would have suffered any qualms of conscience if he had paid homage to Jehovah as well as to his own personal deities. Today in India, Muhammad and Christ are cordially welcomed into the ever-increasing pantheon of Hinduism. Through the centuries, insistence upon the exclusive worship of Jehovah has aroused the antipathy of the "broad-minded." Solomon had long ago given the weight of his great name and example to this "broad-minded" hospitality to foreign gods. When Ahab worshiped at the shrine of his wife's god, he probably thought of it as much and as little as would a nominal Protestant of today if he should join in the church worship of his Catholic wife. But happily there were in Ahab's day men who saw clearly that the king was losing to his people their one fair jewel, and was losing to himself his soul.

A man's religion always affects his relations with his fellowmen. Still in Israel the rights of the people to the lands of their fathers were held inalienable. Ahab desired a bit of property adjoining his palace. He just wanted a little garden; that was all. He offered the owner Naboth a better piece of land or the worth of his vineyard in money. But with curious obstinacy Naboth refused to sell, and proceeded to invoke the name of Jehovah, and "to get excited." Ahab

the great diplomat, himself so generous to captive kings and to heathen deities, failed to understand this act of near-rebellion on the part of Naboth. He sulked upon his bed, like a spoiled child. Jezebel did not sulk. "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?" (I Kings 21:7). False witnesses soon compassed Naboth's death and Ahab arose to go down to his vineyard to possess it.

To the Jehovah of the Ten Commandments Ahab's high-handed murder would, of course, be abhorrent. To the Jehovah of the images of Dan and Bethel, Ahab's act would be a peccadillo, washed away by a little blood or even perhaps by a little water. To a God who could live in hospitable proximity to deities of the Sidonians, Ahab would be a good king, who knew how to show his subjects their place, either in the field, in the vineyard, or in the grave.

Ahab had not paid for his vineyard. He was soon to meet a man who could tell him precisely what he would have to pay. Our study now leads us to a somewhat more careful inquiry concerning the relations of royalty to the prophets.

Eighth Week, Seventh Day.

4. Ahab and the Prophets

a. *Prophetic Guilds.*

In the early periods of Israel's recorded history we find groups of men called companies of prophets. In I Sam. 19:18-24, we come upon these men, going along the country roads with harp and psaltery before them. During their so-called prophecies, they would lie, stripped, in an ecstasy or half-stupor, sometimes for a whole day and night. These dervish-like, fakir-like men were disliked, despised, at the same time feared and sought after, because through them the common people thought to get their most reliable information regarding the world of mystery which ever surrounds and impinges upon our life. Today there are women who would not dream of inviting a clairvoyant to dinner, who in an emergency will seek a clairvoyant. These "prophets"

gathered in guilds, schools, or religious colonies, around some sanctuary like Bethel or Gilgal, where they nursed their religious frenzies and their intense, narrow, but impressive patriotism and devotion to Jehovah. Representatives of these prophetic guilds, "sons of the prophets," played an important part in the life-story of Ahab. But Ahab also came into contact with men who have been called the "false" prophets.

b. *"False Prophets."*

The "false" prophets were not prophets of false gods. They were almost certainly members in good and regular standing of the prophetic guilds; but they were nationalistic prophets, who identified the interests of Jehovah with the interests of the nation and the interests of the nation with those of Jehovah. To them it seemed incredible that ruin should befall the nation, for that would mean the ruin of Jehovah himself. These prophets were doubtless often absolutely true to their lights. They had the sure conviction that the triumph of their deity was inseparable from the triumph of their dynasty. But presuppositions of this sort would naturally lead these prophets to an undiscriminating devotion to the interests of the court. They must not "love the truth too dangerously." How easy it is for patriots in any age to use with an infamous connotation the words, "My country, right or wrong." In the later days Ezekiel was to write of prophetesses who "slay the souls that should not die, and . . . save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hearken unto lies" (Ezek. 13:19). And Jeremiah, writing a little earlier than Ezekiel, indicates clearly the temptation and the vice of nationalistic prophets of all time: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5:31). In one episode Ahab appears surrounded by four hundred prophets, who propose to give him, not the word of some heathen deity, but "the word of Jehovah," and who unhesitatingly urge upon Ahab and his ally the campaign which they are themselves eager to enter.

> And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire first, I pray thee, for the word of Jehovah. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king. . . . Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until they be consumed. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the king. —I Kings 22: 5, 6, 10-12.

Lowell's contemporary might have sat for a portrait of the average "false" prophet of Ahab's day:

> "Gineral C. is a dreffle smart man:
> He's been on all sides that give place or pelf;
> But consistency still wuz a part of his plan,—
> He's ben true to *one* party,—an' thet is himself."

c. *Prophets of "Baal."*

While Ahab regarded himself as a worshiper of Jehovah, and, upon examination, could point to the fact that he was supporting not less than four hundred of Jehovah's prophets, he "played safe" with his wife and with the Tyrian baal, Melkart. Elijah declared, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men" (I Kings 18: 22). These prophet-parasites must have sucked the blood from the little kingdom of Israel during the days of famine. But there can be little doubt of their sincerity as well as their fanaticism. We can see them now, as they call upon their god, leap about the altar, cut themselves with knives and lances till the blood gushes out upon them (I Kings 18: 25-29).

But it was Ahab's good fortune, and ours, that he met another kind of prophet.

Ninth Week, First Day.

d. *Micaiah and Elijah.*

The original designation of the prophet was "seer." "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer" (I Sam. 9:9).

The derivation of the Hebrew word "prophet" is uncertain. Some have thought that it comes from a word meaning "to bubble forth," as under inspiration. Others have supposed that the root word means "to announce" or "to proclaim." We have often been reminded that a prophet is a forthteller rather than a foreteller. Prediction is incidental rather than essential to the prophet's task. A man might utter no specific prediction, yet be a very great prophet. "To have a message from God and to deliver it to men, this is the essence of prophetism." The Scripture narrative reverently looks upon Moses as a prophet (Deut. 18:18). Samuel, the king-maker, and Nathan, David's political adviser and father-confessor, are in the foremost rank of the goodly company of the prophets.

In Ahab's time the fusion of Jehovah worship with Canaanitish worship, and more especially the vicious hospitality shown by royalty to foreign deities, produced a glorious religious reaction, led by two of the most notable men in the prophetic succession, Elijah and Micaiah.

Of Micaiah we read only in connection with the incident to which already reference has been made (p. 172). We find in I Kings 22:1-40 the dramatic story of the great but little-known prophet, Micaiah. As Ahab and Jehoshaphat conferred about their proposed campaign for the capture of Ramoth-Gilead, they sought "the word of Jehovah." Four hundred court prophets spoke with vast assurance of the success of the campaign. The unanimity of the prophets was to Jehoshaphat somewhat suspicious. He had met with

that brand of unanimity before, in his own capital. "Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah besides, that we may inquire of him?" Ahab had to confess that there was one such man; but he added, "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." Jehoshaphat was not quite happy until Micaiah was summoned.

> And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak thou good. And Micaiah said, As Jehovah liveth, what Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak.—I Kings 22: 13, 14.

When Micaiah stood before the kings, he began, in satirical imitation of the "false" prophets, to urge the campaign. When constrained to speak frankly, he flatly declared that the four hundred prophets had a lying spirit, sent from Jehovah, to entice Ahab to his destruction.

> Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of Jehovah from me to speak unto thee? And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see on that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, Jehovah hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hear, ye peoples, all of you.—I Kings 22: 24-28.

Ahab had met his master. Four hundred court prophets of Jehovah, hordes of priests and prophets of Melkart, courtiers and politicians by the score, eager to bring Judah and Jehoshaphat into an offensive alliance—all these backed the able and resourceful king. One is reminded of Luther at Worms, of Knox before Mary, Queen of Scots. It is a

good thing to remember Micaiah, and to enter into his thoughts as in his prison he eats the bread of affliction and drinks the water of affliction; to enter into his thoughts again as he learns in the prisonhouse of Ahab's death, and of the miserable flight of Israel's warriors. Did you ever read Sill's poem, "The Reformer"?

"Before the monstrous wrong he sets him down—
One man against a stone-walled city of sin.
For centuries those walls have been a-building;
Smooth porphyry, they slope and coldly glass
The flying storm and wheeling sun. No chink,
No crevice lets the thinnest arrow in.
He fights alone, and from the cloudy ramparts
A thousand evil faces jibe and jeer at him.
Let him lie down and die: what is the right,
And where is justice in a world like this?
But by and by, earth shakes herself, impatient;
And down in one great roar of ruin, crash
Watch-tower and citadel and battlements.
When the red dust has cleared, the lonely soldier
Stands with strange thoughts beneath the friendly stars."

What became of Micaiah we do not know. He never attained to much fame. Few Freshmen ever heard of him!

"He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide."

Ninth Week, Second Day.

Read rapidly I Kings 17 and 18—Elijah stories, illuminating the life of the prophet and his times.

Ahab, statesman and general, had already learned to know and to fear a man greater than Micaiah, a man whose name is suggestive of his life, Elijah (Jah is God). He appears suddenly in the story of the Bible, like Melchizedek, "without father or mother," his ancestry unknown, his very birthplace uncertain. One day, clothed with a garment of hair, with a girdle of leather about his loins, he swung himself

into the busy haunt of diplomacy and intrigue, Samaria, and said unto Ahab, "As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1).

To Elijah the long drought was the sure sign of Jehovah's displeasure at the Baal-worship of the court. The story follows the man down to the brook Cherith and thence to a "heathen" city, where he was sustained by a poor widow, who in turn was blessed by the man of God.

The drought pressed hard upon Ahab and his land.

One day he met Elijah:

> Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred, that eat at Jezebel's table.
>
> So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.—I Kings 18:17b-24.

The contest on Carmel ended with the complete vindication of Elijah, the "conversion" of the people to exclusive Jehovah worship, the ruthless slaughter of the prophets of Baal. The long vigil for the promised rain, the cloud "as

small as a man's hand," the running of the prophet before the chariot of Ahab—these are unforgettable pictures.

Read I Kings 19, for the picture of the prophet's despondency and its cure.

The triumph of Elijah was short-lived. Jezebel, most "efficient" and malicious of women, vowed the prophet's death. Elijah fled from the woman's fury, and in the wilderness, under a juniper tree, prayed for death. "It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." To the religious man there is no time so perilous as that immediately after a period of great achievement and exaltation. But Jehovah had further use for his devotee: "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee." "The journey is too great for thee." Elijah knew that very well. "But," we may imagine that we hear him say, "my God, dost thou know, dost thou care?" The message to Elijah does not end here. If God should merely sympathize with us, we should grow flabby. "Arise and eat." Where God sympathizes, God sustains, sustains to the journey's end.

> And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?—I Kings 19: 9-13.

The story of the prophet at Horeb is one of the most suggestive narratives of the Bible. Elijah had been the prophet of the wind, the earthquake, the fire. But not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, was Jehovah to be found.

> "Lightning and thunder (heaven's artillery)
> As harbingers before the Almighty fly;
> Those but proclaim his style, and disappear;
> The stiller sound succeeds, and God is there!"

After the fire came a voice of gentle stillness. And the voice bade the prophet not to lie down and die, nor yet to forget his trouble in solitary meditation. "Go, return upon thy way. Not an anchorite, in gloomy self-conceit imagining thyself to be my only devotee and defender in Israel, return, and thou shalt discover seven thousand of my friends, whom thou hast ignored; go back into the world of politics, and put the fear of Jehovah into the hearts of statesmen; go back, and lose thyself in the thought of thy successor whom thou shalt anoint to carry on thy work."

Ninth Week, Third Day.

The Elijah stories make upon us the impression that we are in the presence of one of the great pioneers of true religion.

For this man there could be no easygoing tolerance of other religions, no divided allegiance, no false liberality which worships at every shrine, but yawns as it prays to Jehovah. For him there could be none of that shallowness which mistakes itself for breadth. "If you want to leap about Baal's altars, if you regard Baal as God, serve him. But don't everlastingly limp between the two sides." He struck at the very heart of the vice of many a college Junior, who "limps" between agnosticism and faith. He struck at the heart of the vice of many a business man, who "limps" between Mammonism and Christianity.

"God will have all, or none; serve Him or fall
Down before Baal, Bel, or Belial:
Either be hot or cold: God doth despise,
Abhor and spew out all Neutralities."

Again, this man saw what Ahab ignored, what most of his contemporaries did not see: that devotion to Jehovah cannot be divorced from devotion to justice. Professor Jastrow tells us that in the ancient Gilgamesh story of the Flood, there is the implication that the workmen appropriated three sar of asphalt and pitch, and the boatman secreted two sar of oil as his share of the graft, while building the ark of the hero. And in later and better times men have undertaken to build the ark of safety for democracy, and at the same time to provide against the rain an ample waterproofing of the gains of the profiteer.

But even kings can't stifle the cry of Naboth's blood. In the after days kings forgot, but the Hebrew people and their prophets never forgot, the meeting of Elijah with Ahab, when the prophet told the king what he would have to pay for that vineyard which his judicial murder had won him:

> And the word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will utterly sweep thee away and will cut off from Ahab every man-child, and him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.—I Kings 21: 17-21.

Elijah taught the peasants of Israel that Jehovah is on the side of the oppressed—on the side, not of despotism, but of democracy.

It has been said of Elijah that he was "among the greatest and most original of the Hebrew prophets; indeed it is in him that Hebrew prophecy first appears as a great spiritual and ethical power, deeply affecting the destiny and religious character of the nation." A most uncomfortable man he was, a most uncompromising man. Ahab couldn't do a thing with him. He had a way of answering back, which the king could not well bear. "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel? . . . I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house" (I Kings 18:17, 18).

> "His eyes were dreadful, for you saw
> That they saw God."

Elijah is one of the men who have "ploughed rather than written" their names in history. In Malachi, we have a prediction, written centuries later, which looks forward, not to some new prophet, but hopes that the ever circling years will bring back at last the prophet of the older day. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come" (Mal. 4:5). Of John the Baptist it was predicted that he should go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the apostles saw in vision beside their Master two men—the one, Moses, representative of the Law, the other, Elijah, representative of the Prophets. To this day in Palestine the peasants think of the prophet as wandering among the caves on the heights of Carmel. Ahab, Ben-hadad, Shalmaneser—

> "Great captains, with their guns and drums,
> Disturb our judgment for the hour,
> But at last silence comes."

And out from the silence we hear the voice of the lonely man who speaks for Jehovah, the God before whom he stands.

Ninth Week, Fourth Day.

5. Elisha and His Contemporaries

Read II Kings 1: 1-8, 3, 9, and 10, for insight into the ways of kings and prophets in Elisha's time.

The successor of Ahab was unworthy of his name, Ahaziah (Jah holds, or supports). We spoke of the "conversion" of Israel to exclusive Jehovah worship. We did well to put the word conversion in quotation marks, for the conversion seems to have been transient enough. Almost the only incident recorded of Ahaziah is this: that he "sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this sickness." Elijah sent messengers to him to ask, "Is it because there is no God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub?" (II Kings 1: 2, 3).

Elisha prayed that he might receive a double portion of his master's spirit. He certainly needed it, for he inherited the great unfinished task of Elijah. There were probably few men in Israel who felt any inconsistency between Ahaziah's worship of Jehovah and his inquiry of the oracle at the famous shrine of Ekron.

In most respects Elisha presents a striking contrast to his predecessor. He is a man of the village and of the city; a courtier, always surrounded by "the sons of the prophets," by soldiers or emissaries of royalty.

We see this counselor of kings going with Jehoram of Israel, with Jehoshaphat of Judah, and with the vassal ruler of Edom, against Mesha of Moab. It is his practical advice, given apparently under the inspiration of a minstrel, which wins the battle for the allies.

Of rather sinister interest is the relation of Elisha to the conspiracy and enthronement of Jehu, the ruthless murderer and "Defender of the Faith." The slaughter of the kings both of Israel and of Judah, the wholesale killing of "all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his

great men and his familiar friends, until he left none remaining"; the hideous fraud perpetrated upon the priests and worshipers of Baal—all this probably did not disturb the conscience of Elisha, as it did not trouble the narrator of the incidents.

> And Jehovah said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.—II Kings 10:30.

A century later Hosea was to render a very different verdict upon the political and religious murders of Jehu. Hosea's child was to bear to the descendants of Jehu the message of doom:

> And Jehovah said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.—Hos. 1:4.

The facts and their chronology are somewhat obscure; but it would seem that Elisha played a most important part in the relations of Israel to her northern neighbor, Syria. The divine foresight of Elisha is said to have saved the king of Israel from his enemy "not once nor twice." In one fascinating story (II Kings 6:8-17) we read that the Syrian king determined to seize upon this man who could tell his king the things the Syrian spoke in his bedchamber. Elisha was at Dothan. His servant cried, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha's God opened the young man's eyes, and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. It has been said of Phillips Brooks that he lived and moved and had his being in a world which to Huxley was non-existent for lack of evidence. Little Helen Keller said to Brooks, "I knew all about God before you told me, only I did not know his name." A young soldier of the Great War says: "I do not fear to trust my unknown future to a known God." Some men seem ever to

live with eyes anointed to see the mountains full of horses and chariots. Some men seem to feel that God

"presses close
And palpitatingly, His soul o'er ours."

To other men, the veil of sense hangs dark between them and the face of God. In "A Student in Arms" Hankey says: "True religion means betting one's life that there is a God." No man ever lost that bet. "If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me." And the discovery of God, his horses and chariots, transforms a man from a victim into a victor.

Ninth Week, Fifth Day.

Read II Kings 6:24-7:20, the story of the well-fed beggars and the famished city.

Among the stories of Elisha and his contemporaries one reads with peculiar sympathy that of the siege of Samaria. A dreadful case of cannibalism was called to the attention of the king; the king rent his garments; men saw beneath the robes of royalty "sackcloth within upon his flesh." Elisha predicted abundance of food within twenty-four hours, a prediction which the chief captain thought might be fulfilled if windows were opened in heaven. Four leprous men lay starving outside the city gates. They determined in despair to "fall unto the host of the Syrians." They were amazed to find that a panic due to false rumors had broken up the enemy's camp. They ate and drank as much as they possibly could, probably for the first time in their lives; they hid away silver and gold and raiment, and dreamed golden dreams. And then the meaning and the peril of their act dawned upon them—a day of good tidings, a starving city—and they said: "We do not well; let us go and tell the king's household."

Elisha usually employed his powers to repel the forces of Syria, but one story, on which we do not dwell, reveals a

somewhat close, if not sympathetic, understanding between him and the murderous usurper of the Syrian throne, Hazael (II Kings 8:7-15).

Read II Kings 5, the entire chapter, for complete narrative of Naaman.

> So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. —II Kings 5:9-14.

A pleasanter story of his relation to Syria is the more familiar one of Elisha and Naaman. The little nameless slave girl in the home of the great Syrian general, with her "witness—true, rational, and vital," proceeded to "put her witness home." "Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy" (verse 3). The great man, with the one damning defect, journeyed with ostentatious retinue to Israel. Elisha's abrupt and seemingly arbitrary command naturally exasperated Naaman. "Are not Abanah and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the muddy streams of Israel?" "The repulsion of the easy" has always been felt by strong men. When at last Naaman was cured, he would lavish

great gifts upon the prophet, but Elisha replied, "As Jehovah liveth, I will receive none." Gehazi, "the grafter," had no prophetic scruples. "As Jehovah liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." A preacher, pursuing the story of Gehazi, has well spoken of "the by-products of graft."

The worth of Elisha to the kings of Israel in their long conflicts with Syria is emphasized by the story that when the king of Israel came down to see the old prophet on his deathbed, Joash "wept over him, and said, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" (II Kings 13: 14-19). To the king, the death of the prophet was the loss of a father—the loss, as it were, of the horsemen and chariots of Israel.

Many wonder-works are attributed to Elisha, some of them rather pale repetitions of those recorded of his master, Elijah. Most of these miraculous stories add to our sense of the kindliness of the man. That which bids us to hear his curse upon the boys, and to see two she-bears tear "forty and two lads of them" helps us to appreciate the atmosphere of cruelty which all men of the time breathed, which the compilers of the stories breathed, an atmosphere from which later prophets began to lead men into the purer air of loftier heights.

As we inquire more particularly of the religion of Elisha, we are disappointed to find that he was much more a man of his time than was Elijah. He acquiesced in the customs and conceptions of his age, and accepted them willingly as his own.

> And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him; and he said, Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a present of thy servant. But he said, As Jehovah liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused. And Naaman said, If not, yet, I pray thee, let there be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth; for thy servant

will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto Jehovah. In this thing Jehovah pardon thy servant: when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, Jehovah pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.—II Kings 5: 15-19.

He apparently approved the determination of Naaman to take two mules' burden of earth up to Syria, that the new convert to Jehovah worship might have some of Jehovah's real estate upon which to build his altar to his newly-chosen deity. It would seem at this point that to Elisha, as to his contemporaries, the limits of Jehovah's rule were the boundary lines surrounding the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah.

He seems, moreover, to have acceded without hesitancy to the request of Naaman that he be permitted to bow himself "in the house of Rimmon," when the king of Syria should lean upon his hand as he worshiped in the heathen temple. A writer says of the early Christians: "If they threw a handful of incense on the fires before the bust of the emperor, they were before their own consciences guilty of the grossest idolatry; if they refused, they were in the eyes of their fellows branded as traitors." During the Boxer outbreaks of 1900, it would have been easy enough for multitudes of Chinese Christians to escape death, if they had but followed the simple plan of Naaman, so kindly endorsed by Elisha!

One has suggested that it may not be quite accidental that Elisha is mentioned only once in the New Testament. But we must measure the greatness of the man, not by his nearness to the standard of Jesus Christ, but by his distance from the standard of the times in which he lived. When Ahab's son, Jehoram, engaged in his rather modest act of reform, and put away "the pillar (obelisk) of Baal that his father had made" (II Kings 3: 2), Elisha doubtless applauded and aided. When Jehu, with ruthless, remorseless zeal, destroyed the worship and the worshipers of foreign baalim, Elisha co-

operated with a glad heart. He shared his people's misery when Jehu was forced to send tribute to Assyria. How grievous the burden was may be inferred from the black obelisk of Shalmaneser, which reads: "Tribute of Jehu, son of Omri[5]—objects of silver and gold—bars of silver, bars of gold, a golden bowl, a golden ladle, golden goblets, golden pitchers, bars of lead—a staff for the hand of a king, shafts of spears . . . these I received."

Elisha doubtless advised his people in the long early wars of liberation from the Syrian yoke, sorrowed with them when Hazael brought Israel very low in the day of Jehoahaz, rejoiced with them in the hope that Joash (Jehoash) would be their deliverer.

The prophet entered, though he did not abide in, the kingdom of kindly hearts, in which Jesus bade men live as birthright citizens. Between Elisha and Jesus there are eight hundred years of human striving, of divine education.

II. THE CONTEMPORARY FORTUNES OF JUDAH[6]

Ninth Week, Sixth Day.

While events of great importance were thus occurring in the political and religious life of northern Israel, while men of exceptional ability were there making history, the Southern Kingdom knew, for the most part, a period of "first-rate events, but second-rate men." The line of David did persist, though at one time its continuance depended upon the life of a little child, hidden away from intended slaughter (II Kings 11:1-11).

The political history of Judah during our entire period reminds one of the history of a Balkan state.

We need to recall two or three events of importance.

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[5] This title given by the Assyrian to Jehu the usurper shows how deep an impression had been made upon his contemporaries by Omri.

[6] Note with some care on the historical chart (p. 11) the reigns of the Judean kings in the days of the Divided Kingdom.

1. Relations with Northern Israel

Jehoshaphat (876-851 B. C.) thought to settle the long-standing feud with northern Israel by the marriage of his son, Jehoram, to the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah. This shrewd stroke of diplomacy was to prove suicidal. Athaliah was the worthy daughter of Jezebel, and did not hesitate to seek the murder of all her relatives, when occasion served. Jehoshaphat tried to play with docility his part in the alliance with Israel. He was indeed somewhat squeamish about entering a campaign without the endorsement of a true prophet of Jehovah (p. 175). But he yielded with delightful plasticity to the deft handling of Ahab. By the way, he once tried his hand at a commercial venture, but when his ships went to pieces in a storm, he gave it up.

> Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.—I Kings 22: 48, 49.

Now and again Judah wearied of peace with northern Israel, and ventured into futile war. A story told of Amaziah (796-782 B. C.) is well worth studying.

> Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thy heart hath lifted thee up: glory thereof, and abide at home; for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?—II Kings 14: 8-10.

In a word, the king of Israel treated Amaziah "as a good-natured giant might treat a dwarf." But Amaziah was not

content till he had "looked in the face" his stronger neighbor. Before the war ended, Jehoash "brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of Jehovah, and in the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria" (II Kings 14: 13, 14).

2. Relations with Syria

If perchance Judah was at peace with Israel, she was harassed by the possibility of invasion from the remarkably vital and vigorous people of Syria to the north. In 810 B. C. we find Hazael the Syrian making his way down as far as Jerusalem. He was bought off only by a grievous tribute. One wonders how the poor little kings of Judah got gold enough to pour into the mouths of their greedy foes.

> Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it; and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and of the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.—II Kings 12: 17, 18.

Ninth Week, Seventh Day.

Meanwhile the *religion of Jehovah* was meeting with varied fortunes in Judah.

Rehoboam, while the protector of Jehovah's central sanctuary, had evidently given his royal support to the venerable Canaanitish shrines, in which almost certainly Jehovah was worshiped, but with all the paraphernalia and with all the immoralities of the heathen cult.

> And Judah did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and they provoked him to jealousy with their

sins which they committed, above all that their fathers had done. For they also built them high places, and pillars, and Asherim, on every high hill, and under every green tree; and there were also sodomites in the land: they did according to all the abominations of the nations which Jehovah drove out before the children of Israel.—I Kings 14:22-24.

Asa (917-876 B. C.) appears to have carried through some rather rigorous reforms, driving from the land the loose servants of the heathenish worship of the time, and even destroying an "abominable image" made by the queen mother (I Kings 15:13).

When Athaliah came to the throne, she devoted herself to the worship of the god of her mother, Jezebel. Upon her death the popular, patriotic party, led by the priests of Jehovah, swept away every trace of her foreign cult, and vigorously entered upon the restoration of Solomon's temple.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people; between the king also and the people. And all the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of Jehovah. And he took the captains over hundreds, and the Carites, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of Jehovah, and came by the way of the gate of the guard unto the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. And Athaliah they had slain with the sword at the king's house.—II Kings 11:17-20.

A period followed of kaleidoscopic changes—now political independence, now submission; now religious relapse, now reform.

We must note one striking advance in ethical practice. As a statesman, Amaziah was a failure (see p. 189), but according to the record, he was brave enough to break away from

a bloody custom sanctified by the moral code of almost every race of his time.

> And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he slew his servants who had slain the king his father: but the children of the murderers he put not to death; according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, as Jehovah commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin.—II Kings 14: 5, 6.

One man—and not a great man, either—refused to bow to the custom which involved a sinner's family, friends, and possessions in common doom (p. 126).

Concluding Note

In the course of the century and a half which we have been studying, we have seen the little divided distracted kingdoms fighting literally for their lives. Because of its more exposed situation, northern Israel was swept more swiftly into the current of world politics. Both kingdoms shared the bitterness of defeat at the hands of Syria. While Judah lived over again in memory Egyptian oppression (p. 75), Israel knew the tragedy of submission to the yet mightier world power, Assyria.

The Northern Kingdom had driven from their thrones the local baals, to enthrone Jehovah, to call him "Baali," my Baal, and to worship him according to the old immoral rites, with chief sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan. Worse still, Ahab, in the interest of foreign diplomacy, had introduced the worship of a foreign deity, who must have his shrines, his priests, his prophets. But northern Israel nourished another type of patriot. Micaiah and Elijah saw that the only civic progress or salvation worth striving for was that which issued from an exclusive worship of Jehovah. Largely, perhaps, for political reasons, Jehu aided the prophetic point of view, and by the close of our period, the worship of Mel-

kart, the Tyrian baal, was apparently ended in northern Israel.

The prophets had also revealed to the people the foundation of Jehovah's throne, namely, justice.

In Judah, the foreign cult competing with Jehovah worship did not sink deep roots, but even in Judah the local shrines, while bearing the name of Jehovah, cherished the old fashions of Canaanitish faith.

But there gathered about the temple at Jerusalem a group of men who began to write down the stories of the people of Israel. They wrote of the beginnings of the world's life in Jehovah's will, the entrance of sin into the world, the punishment of sin. They wrote of Abraham, of Joseph, of Moses; of Jehovah's choice of Israel, of Israel's choice of Jehovah. And as they wrote these narratives, now known to us as the Judean or Jahvistic document (p. 7), they and their disciples began to create a new world of thought, in which Isaiah and his comrades were one day to be at home.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the tasks of statesmanship and war presented to Omri and Ahab. How would you explain Ahab's endorsement of the worship of the Tyrian baal?

2. What is the significance of the battle of Karkar?

3. What is the relationship between Ahab's religious attitude and his treatment of Naboth?

4. Characterize the prophetic guilds. What would be their political and religious influence?

5. Characterize the "false" prophets. Would you think it possible that a modern preacher might become a "false" prophet? If so, how?

6. How do you suppose Micaiah gained his insight and foresight?

7. Why could not the great king Ahab and the great prophet Elijah agree? Both were interested in the welfare of their country. Together they would have been invincible.

8. Would you think it proper for a Chinese Christian to bow before the ancestral tablets, on the ground that the outward act is of negligible importance so long as God sees the heart? Why or why not?

9. What view of Jehovah does Naaman reveal in his expressed desire to carry two mules' burden of earth back to Syria for an altar?

10. Would you regard the era studied in this chapter an era of political and religious progress, or decline? Give reason for your estimate.

CHAPTER VIII

Old Problems and New Prophets

The Old Time Religion and the Religious Revolutionists of the Eighth Century Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah

Introductory: Israel's Religious and Ethical Assets in the Early Decades of the Eighth Century

Tenth Week, First Day.

For most of us these men and women, who lived so many years ago in Palestine, are names, or rather collections of alphabetical symbols, distributed in various fashions. Why study about Jeroboam, when you can read about Joffre? Why trace the march of Hazael, when you can follow the tactics of Hindenburg? In the twentieth century, the universe is dropped down into each man's backyard. And the victories, defeats, and alliances of Palestinian monarchs seem like the quarrels and kissings of little children, portrayed on some ancient vase in some musty museum. It is not always easy to distinguish between bigness and greatness, between a heap of sand and a heap of seeds.

"We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great,
Slow of faith, how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate."

Assyria was big; Assyria is dead. When the history of the Great War is written, little Belgium will seem to us very great. In tiny Israel, weak arms were turning the iron helm; and the course of the subsequent ages, yes, of our present

age, has been in no small measure determined by the pressure of those "weak arms" upon the helm.

The eighth century B. C. inherited from the past religious and ethical customs, conceptions, ideals, which became the original working capital of the great prophets of the century.

All the Hebrews of both Northern and Southern Kingdoms agreed that between Israel and Jehovah there was an indissoluble partnership. Probably every Israelite would have assented to the words which come to us from the "Song of Moses":

> He found him in a desert land,
> And in the waste howling wilderness;
> He compassed him about, he cared for him,
> He kept him as the apple of his eye.
> As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
> That fluttereth over her young,
> He spread abroad his wings, he took them,
> He bare them on his pinions.
> Jehovah alone did lead him,
> And there was no foreign god with him.
>
> —Deut. 32: 10-12.

To the average Hebrew, this relationship was as necessary to Jehovah as to Israel (p. 207).

While Jehovah's "home" was in the desert, he had conquered and made his own the land of Palestine. The temple of Jerusalem, the altars of Hebron, of Bethel, and of Dan, and the "high places" throughout the land were objects of Jehovah's special interest, and seats of his special power. Of extreme importance was the ritual. The form, not the spirit of worship, demanded the solicitude of priests and people.

The kingdom of Jehovah was bounded by the boundary lines of northern Israel and Judah. "'Jahveh's inheritance' . . . is Palestine, and one who passed beyond the boundaries of the country left Jahveh behind, and had to place himself under the protection of 'other gods' whose domain he had entered."[1]

[1] Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 144.

In theory Jehovah had supplanted all the local baalim of Palestine; but the conception of Jehovah was saturated with Canaanitish ideas. For example, if the Canaanites burned their sons and their daughters to their baalim, the question pressed hard: Does not Jehovah require like sacrifice? Wells and stones were still haunted by the ancient spirits. Ancient magic might still be strong even under the regime of Jehovah. Said a poor woman of West Africa, who was just learning to make her own the Ten Commandments, or "Tyings": "The tying that ties you not to make a charm—does that forbid a charm to hold your husband's love? For he did exceedingly love me when I was new, and now he has that girl from Nkole he does not so much as eat my food! And my mother knows a charm for this thing, only I said, 'Before I make that charm that you know, I must ask a person of God; I am a Christian and am I able to make that charm?' "[2]

In the early days of the Micronesian Mission, the natives would say: "This island belongs to Jehovah, since missionaries live on it, and if he forbids tattooing ceremonies, we will go to another island . . . which has not been given to Jehovah, and there we will worship the gods of these islands, and will tattoo." And seven or eight hundred people left the island of the missionaries for the performance of the ancient, discredited, but most desirable ceremony.

A missionary in India says in a somewhat discouraged fashion, "We often hear about secret Christians in India, but we do not stop to inquire how many secret Hindus there may be"—those who have named the name of Christ, and try to follow him, but yield to the terrific tug of the ancient faith and ritual.

National victories would tend to increase the devotion of the Hebrews to Jehovah. National defeats would weaken the devotion, or lead to the question: "What ritual have we failed to perform in order to retain the protection and support of our God?" Increasing international entanglements

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[2] Jean K. Mackenzie, "An African Trail," p. 117.

profoundly affected religion. We have seen (I Kings 11: 5-8) Solomon giving welcome to the gods of neighbor nations. We have seen the cult of Melkart achieving royal favor in Israel and later in Judah. While the worship of the Tyrian baal disappeared, Jehovah had to compete in popular thought with other living and powerful gods.

The character of Jehovah was still very imperfectly revealed. Jehovah was thought to be cruel, vengeful. In a singularly lofty passage Jehovah is made to speak in language which expresses the prevalent conception of their God held by Israelites of the eighth and many succeeding centuries:

> If I whet my glittering sword,
> And my hand take hold on judgment;
> I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,
> And will recompense them that hate me.
> I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
> And my sword shall devour flesh;
> With the blood of the slain and the captives,
> From the head of the leaders of the enemy.
>
> —Deut. 32: 41, 42.

In David's time the people could suffer from a three years' famine presumably because of the cruelty of Saul years before; and Jehovah's wrath could be appeased if David took seven of Saul's sons, and hanged them up unto Jehovah. "And after that God was entreated for the land" (II Sam. 21: 14). The later compiler of the stories of David's life acquiesces in the deed of cruelty, and the truly dreadful conception of Jehovah. Elijah and Elisha were both sure that they were doing Jehovah's will when they slaughtered, or assented to the slaughter of, the representatives of baal worship.

The effect of this imperfect conception of Jehovah upon communal morals is obvious. Elijah had preached justice to Ahab, but practiced cruelty against the priests of Baal. Justice toward women, toward children, toward slaves and aliens was often rank injustice.

Happily, there were not lacking signs of better days. George Adam Smith suggests that as far back as the time of Samuel "the patriotic enthusiasm of the uprising against Philistine domination began to lift the prophets clear of the functions and the magical implements of soothsaying, and cut them loose from ceremonial religion in general. These functions now fell to the priests. This was probably the greatest relief which prophecy experienced in the course of its evolution." Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha, were not officials attached to particular shrines. They were speakers for Jehovah to the nation. Their freedom from the control of priestly custom and environment liberated their thought. With courageous hearts they climbed toward God. Meanwhile men of light and leading were writing and teaching the lessons of Israel's early history—perhaps the first Bible of the people.

Our present chapter brings us to the study of the life, the teachings, and the times of four men who were themselves revolutionists and who have been fomenting religious revolutions ever since. Their names are Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. The student of the Kingdom of God may pursue his investigations farther back than the era of these men; but he may not start with a later period.

I. TWO PROPHETS TO THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

Tenth Week, Second Day.

1. Northern Israel in the Days of Amos and Hosea[3]

So enormous has been the influence of Israel upon the world that we find it hard to realize how meager was its geographical extent. The boundaries of Palestine varied much from time to time. But the distance from north to south

[3] To place Amos and Hosea definitely is their proper historic perspective, note carefully the chart, p. 11, under The Divided Kingdom.

was scarcely more than 150 miles (about the distance between New York and Albany or between Buffalo and Toledo), while from east to west the width varied from twenty-five to eighty miles. "From Egypt's border to Jerusalem was about 100 miles; from Jerusalem to Samaria was forty-five miles; from Samaria to Damascus was 115 miles; from Damascus to Hamath 130 miles; from Hamath to Euphrates 100 miles. In all, from the border of Egypt to the border of Assyria was 490 miles." (The distance from New York to Cleveland is 568 miles.)

The figures give us some slight appreciation of the throbbing, intense life which must have been lived in Israel, itself divided. Israel and the whole world trembled in those days when Assyria's kings went to war. The annals of the Assyrians "are full of talk about trampling down their enemies, showering tempests of clubs upon them, and raining a deluge of arrows . . . about chariots with scythes, and wheels clogged with blood, about great baskets stuffed with the salted heads of their foes." But in northern Israel all things were fair as a day in June; so to the thoughtless it seemed. Jeroboam II (781-740 B. C.) was "the most successful of the Northern Israelitish kings." He extended the boundaries of his little kingdom and brought to his people a period of rare assurance and comparative prosperity. Men dreamed that the days of David were coming back to Israel. Drunkards, lolling on ivory couches, drinking wine in bowls, could not hear the lion's roar. But it was "Israel's Indian summer," soon to pass into the dead of winter. "Four of the six kings who succeeded Jeroboam II were struck down by assassins, and one died in captivity."

> Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and

every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. Yet let no man strive, neither let any man reprove; for thy people are as they that strive with the priest. And thou shalt stumble in the day, and the prophet also shall stumble with thee in the night; and I will destroy thy mother.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.—Hos. 4: 1-6.

The family life was corrupt. "Harlotry," says Hosea, "wine and new wine take away the heart," that is, the brains. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." In his marvelous figures Hosea states the obvious facts of the ordinary social life of the times.

For they have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. They are all hot as an oven, and devour their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me.

Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not.—Hos. 7: 6-9.

The baker's "oven" speaks of the heat of unsubdued passion. The "cake not turned" is the true picture of a social life, the one side burned by excessive luxury and dilettantism, the other side raw with ignorance and brutality. "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not." When college alumni return to their alma mater for their tenth reunion, they look upon each other, fat or shriveled, bald-headed or gray-headed, and can scarcely identify the boys they used to know only a decade ago. But the old boys themselves have no idea that they have changed. The deterioration of Israel was all unconscious. "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not." "Are we not prosperous, are we not victorious?" Again, "Ephraim

feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind"—or "Israel herds the wind, and hunts the sirocco" (Hos. 12:1, translation by G. A. Smith). Israel is a shepherd, herding, not flocks, but wind; Israel is a hunter, following hard, not after wild beasts, but the wild hot blast from the desert—a nation rotting away through dissoluteness into dissolution.

For the general decadence, the people were not to be blamed. "Let no man strive, neither let any man reprove; for thy people are as they that strive with the priest" (4:4). "As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way toward Shechem" (6:9). The priests are a miserable lot of murderers and adulterers. The situation would be bad enough in our time, if our ministry were rotten. The influence of Israel's priesthood was especially pernicious, because of its extraordinarily close relation, not alone to royalty, but to the requirements of the people. The average Israelite obtained his religious satisfactions, not so much in his tent, or on his housetop, as in the shrine or sanctuary. Thither he went up "to meet Jehovah," as he would say. Now let the priests of one shrine compete with the priests of another shrine in sensual attractions for the worshipers; further, let the priests get a grip upon the legal as well as the religious requirements of their people; and the general debasement of morals becomes inevitable.

Tenth-Week, Third Day.

2. Amos, the Man and His Message

Amos is the first prophet known to have written his prophecies. His home, Tekoa, was in the Southern Kingdom, six miles south of Bethlehem, twelve miles from Jerusalem. In "this haggard and desolate world," this wilderness region, John the Baptist in the after-time was to prepare his stern evangel. In this same wilderness Jesus was one day to meet the Tempter, and wrest from him victory for himself and for the world. Amos was not a man of the prophetic guilds. "No prophet I, nor prophet's son." He had never learned the

lessons or known the bondage of the schools. Yet he was not "uneducated." Moulton finds in his poetry "a structural elaboration which makes a greater effect than in any other prophetic writing." In Amos we have no ordinary nomad of the desert: a poet, rather, familiar with the use of poetic language, touched by the fire of God—one of those men to whom the deep night with its stars, the speech of the shepherds in their tents, the rhythm of the songs of the well, had taught the swing and the power of poetic utterance.[4] He had listened and he had seen.

We infer that he was poor. His poverty may be suggested by the fact of his double occupation, that of the herdsman and the dresser of sycomore trees. He scourges the rich, but this fact of itself would not make certain his poverty. "The prophets in some cases were men of the people. In all cases they were men for the people."

Amos's style of speech is greatly influenced by the environment of the desolate heights and the shepherd life. Now we see the fire sweeping across the fields, now suffer from the dreadful consuming drought. Now we hear the lion's roar, or see the little bird fluttering in the trap. We see two men meet on the wide veldt; it must be by appointment or through previous acquaintance. Again we see a shepherd bearing to his master the legs or the piece of an ear of a sheep, pathetic proof that the sheep is "gone," but has been devoured by beasts rather than by thievish men. We breathe the atmosphere of the heights, lonely, lofty, beneath the stars and the sun, the eye of God.

When did Amos utter his message? Approximately 760 or 750 B. C. "Probably the impression produced by the great solar eclipse of 763 B. C. lies behind the threat that 'the sun shall go down at noon.'" The date is about twenty-five years later than the beginning of the first Greek Olympiad, 776 B. C., and practically the same as the date of the traditional founding of Rome, 753 B. C.

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[4] See p. 471, for discussion of Hebrew poetry.

To *whom* did Amos bring his message? He uttered some, certainly, of his prophecies at the vile and sacred altars of Bethel, in the presence of priests and worshipers, gathered at some festal occasion. From the priests he could expect no quarter. His words were dynamite. Among the worshipers, there must have been some of "the inarticulate multitude" who would sympathize with him. But in general, the people would look first with contempt, then with madness, upon this man, a semi-foreigner from the south, whose country had but recently been defeated by Israel. Amos's chance of speech was short. The priest of Bethel, chaplain to the king, caught at one of his words: "I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." He sent a message of alarm to the king: "Amos hath conspired against thee." He then turned with fury upon Amos: "Go back to your own country, Judah, and there play the religious grafter, but don't prophesy here any more. This is the king's sanctuary and it is a royal house" (See Amos 7: 10-12).

Of course our sympathy is with Amos; but if a man should today prophesy, before the representatives of any nation, death by the sword to the royal or ruling house of that nation, what would be his fate? At the time of the Boer War, a man in Ladysmith, South Africa, was put into prison because he was "a discourager." How do we like the "defeatist"? With one scorching word of doom, Amos unaffrighted left the sanctuary, to return to his sheep and his trees, to write out his message, and to await the doom of Samaria, which was to come within three decades.

Tenth Week, Fourth Day.

What was Amos's message? The message has been divided into: a. Oracles; b. Sermons; c. Visions.

Read aloud Amos 1 to get the swing as well as the substance of Amos's message.

a. *Oracles,* Chapters 1 and 2.

Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of

> Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron. But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad. And I will break the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden; and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith Jehovah.—Amos 1:3-5.

With the skill and power of a master of oratory Amos wins the attention of his hearers. "Damascus, our ancient enemy, to be destroyed! This is indeed good news." Swift as light, the prophet turns from Damascus in the north to Philistia: "Gaza, center of the slave trade, to be destroyed! Good again!" So Ammon, so Moab, near and dangerous neighbors, all to be punished by Israel's dear, just God! But why? Precisely, why? The popular faith declared: Jehovah is the God of Israel; he will therefore bless those who bless Israel, curse those who curse Israel. Now this man declares that Jehovah is going to curse a nation simply because that nation breaks the bonds of *human* brotherhood.

Amos has gained the eager, tense interest of the people. But the atmosphere is cyclonic. Where will the whirling point of the cyclone strike?

Now, with the slow intensity of a judge rendering the death verdict, Amos turns upon Israel:

> Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes—they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name: and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined.—Amos 2:6-8.

His charges are oppression of the poor, fornication—possibly in the name of religion, debauchery. The infamous

grafters enjoy their nightly carousals "in the house of their God," lying upon pledged garments, which, according to most ancient law, must be returned by nightfall (Exodus 22:25-27); drinking the wine which penitents have brought in payment of fines. But the end is to come:

> Flight shall perish from the swift; and the strong shall not strengthen his force; neither shall the mighty deliver himself; neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself; neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself; and he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith Jehovah.—Amos 2:14-16.

b. *Sermons,* Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Read Amos 3, an ancient sermon, very unpopular, very pertinent to its own time and to ours.

What we may call the first sermon we find in 3:1 to 4:3.

> You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities. Shall two walk together, except they have agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all? Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? shall evil befall a city, and Jehovah hath not done it? Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?—Amos 3:2-8.

The "text" is this: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (3:2). This was not an absolutely new idea. Elijah would have recognized in Amos a man after his own heart; but the idea was utterly opposed to the popular theology. This theology declared: "We have one God, Jehovah.

Other nations have their gods, just as much alive and just as assertive as our God. But Jehovah belongs to us, and we belong to Jehovah. Very well: Israel cannot get along without Jehovah, that's true; but also Jehovah cannot get along without Israel. If Jehovah should be disagreeable, discourteous, so to speak, to us Israelites, then we might give him up, banish him from our borders. What would become of Jehovah then? He would have to live, if he lived at all, in the realm of discarded, discredited deities; to all intents and purposes he would be dead!" "You only have I known (chosen) of all the families of the earth: therefore"—what? Of course, "I will take care of you, nurse you, coddle you, you, the spoiled children of God." Does not, must not God take care of "children, fools, and the United States"? God is a Semitic divine politician, who must of necessity cry, "My country, right or wrong." Nay, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, *therefore* I will visit upon you all your iniquities." To the average Israelite this thought was not only unpalatable, it was incredible. Some scholars would deny to Amos belief in monotheism, although they would acknowledge that he is "moving toward a cosmic conception of God." But whether he is self-consistent or not, he seems at more than one point to make a clean break with the ancient henotheism,[5] even that of Elijah and Elisha; and to rise to an ethical monotheism, whose God is "the God of celestial as well as earthly legions."

To Amos's audience, Jehovah dwelt in a tent, whose floor was the territory of Palestine (say, 150 by 70 miles in area).[6] Amos would seem to imply, if not to say, "Jehovah dwells in a tent, whose floor is the wide earth, and whose covering is the broad sky. Jehovah can get along without you very well. He chose you, and as he chose you, he can reject you." Amos's monotheism or movement toward monotheism is not a speculation. It is intensely practical. When religion

[5] The worship of one deity, accompanied by the recognition of the existence of other deities.

[6] But see Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 143 ff.

is married to ethics, it ceases to be limited by geographical boundaries. Morals cannot be an affair of geography. If a code of morals holds sway anywhere, it must of right hold sway everywhere. But if a code of morals is universally imperative, the God who enunciates, guards, supports that code must become to the religious man a universal God. Now, in the thought of Amos, there is a pure and permanent marriage between the rule of Jehovah and the rule of justice. There is election—oh, yes: Jehovah has elected you, but elected you to the life of justice. Refuse to do justice—you go to the scrap.

With grim irony Amos summons Philistines and Egyptians, "heathen," to gather upon the mountain of Samaria, to see what shocking things are happening there, "what great tumults are therein, and what oppressions in the midst thereof" (3:9). Even so a modern evangelist might summon China, India, the Moslem world, to gaze in wonder at the hideous facts recorded in the daily papers of our land. Before the Great War, Rauschenbusch wrote: "Business life is the unregenerate section of our social order. If by some magic it could be plucked out of the total social life, and isolated on an island, unmitigated by any other factors of our life, that island would at once become the object of a great missionary crusade for all Christendom." It may be that future historians will look back to the infinite tragedy of the Great War as the birth-hour of a new ideal of business, which makes the dealings of the shop and store and office the finest expressions of justice, of brotherhood —not the worthy subjects of "heathen" criticism.

But doom will fall upon the unjust, the prosperous exploiters of the poor; yes, even upon the altars of Bethel—ruin to the Westminster Abbey of northern Israel!—and doom will fall as well upon those women, kine of Bashan, "fat and ferocious," who say to their husbands, "Bring, and let us drink," though analysis shows that the wine is mingled with the blood of men and women and little children. God plays no favorites.

Thus saith Jehovah: As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria in the corner of a couch, and on the silken cushions of a bed.

Hear ye, and testify against the house of Jacob, saith the Lord Jehovah, the God of hosts. For in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Beth-el; and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. And I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith Jehovah.

Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, that oppress the poor, that crush the needy, that say unto their lords, Bring, and let us drink. The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that they shall take you away with hooks, and your residue with fish-hooks. And ye shall go out at the breaches, every one straight before her; and ye shall cast yourselves into Harmon, saith Jehovah.—Amos 3: 12-4: 3.

Tenth Week, Fifth Day.

Read Amos 4: 4 to 6: 1, for a brave indictment of a nation's morals and religion.

We may perhaps think of the second sermon as extending from 4: 4-13, and may find the text in 4: 12, "Prepare to meet thy God." Like all the most enlightened men of his day, Amos believed that disasters, whether in the realm of nature or of politics, were due to the direct intrusion of the punitive hand of God. "Cleanness of teeth" (famine), the mildew or the palmer-worm, pestilence or war were God's direct visitations. Amos knew nothing of what we style "secondary causes," "natural laws." The twentieth century evangelist, who has learned from the book of Job and from the life and teachings of Jesus, speaking in the spirit, but not in the language of Amos, might well say: "God has tried to bring you back to himself by revealing the ruinous effects of lovelessness upon the natural resources of your land, through

the unerring, unresting operation of natural laws; but further he has sought to bring you back to himself by revealing the ruinous effects of lovelessness in your own spiritual lives and in the lives of those who are dear to you, in the slow suicide and murder of sin."

> Come to Beth-el, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days; and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill-offerings and publish them: for this pleaseth you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.—Amos 4:4, 5.

"Come to Bethel," says Amos, "in your jaunty, joyous fashion, join sacrifice to sin and sin to sacrifice, make great ado about your tithes and thank-offerings. This sort of thing pleases you. You think to meet God with the merrymaking and licentiousness of your sanctuary. Alas, *prepare to meet thy God,* a God very different from him whom you think to satisfy by sacrifice *and* sin." And you can almost hear the worshipers whisper: "Isn't that just like a coarse, uncultured shepherd? How sharp and strident his voice is! It is a pity he never had elocution lessons." A writer has remarked: "There is a Base America; there is a Dull America; there is an Ideal and an Heroic America." And it is possible that among Amos's hearers, there were, beside the base and the dull, some who had in their hearts sufficient of idealism and heroism to know the idealist and the hero. But of these there is no record.

We shall consider the third sermon as including the passage, 5:1-17. Its two texts are: "Seek Jehovah and ye shall live" (5:6), "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live" (5:14). In dirge meter, Amos sings "the funeral song" of Israel. But there is a chance to elude communal death—"Seek God, seek good, and ye shall live." Amos's hearers would respond to the first exhortation: "We have been seeking God all the time. We are seeking God now, but you are interrupting us." The moralist of today, the outlines of whose "superhuman

deity" have faded away, would assent at once to the second exhortation. In the union or synthesis of the two exhortations we have the glory of the Hebrew and of the Christian faith. In India we see a religion without ethics. On the other hand, Lord Bryce remarks: "The absence of a religious foundation for thought and conduct is a grave misfortune for Latin America." Morality without religion is barren, and when the sun rises, with its scorching heat, it is likely to wither. Religion without morals is de-moralizing. "The holiest cities of Asia are the vilest." "Seek God *and* good, and live."

In 5: 18 to 6: 14 we have what we may style Amos's fourth and last sermon. We think of it as having two texts: "I hate, I despise your feasts, . . . let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty (perennial) stream" (5: 21, 24), "Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plow (the sea) with oxen? that ye have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood" (6: 12). The sermon deals with Worship, Wickedness, Ruin. Consider what this man says: God whose rule is justice, who plays no favorites, is a God who accepts no substitutes and makes no exceptions.

> Woe unto you that desire the day of Jehovah! Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of Jehovah be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
>
> I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.
>
> Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?—Amos 5: 18-25.

Jehovah accepts no substitutes. Think of it: every shrine a holy slaughterhouse, every place of prayer a place of sacrifice; religion identified with ritual. Yet Amos would actually say that sacrifices were no essential part of the worship of Israel in her pristine age (5:25). He would go further, and say that the very sacrifices which his hearers were making, even while he was speaking, were a stench in the nostrils of Jehovah; that their praise was noise. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. . . . Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs" (5:21, 23). Do the words seem commonplace, superfluous? They mean this: Jehovah has less than no use for our entire organization of religious worship, looks with disgust upon our stained glass windows, listens with abhorrence to our deep-toned organs, our surpliced choirs, regards with contempt our Y. M. C. A. meetings, our Y. P. S. C. E. meetings, except as our services lead to service, except as our ritual leads to righteousness, except as our chapel exercises help to keep our college life free from drunkenness and deception and rottenness, except as from beneath the altar of the sanctuary there flows a perennial stream of fair and honorable dealings with men—Justice. Are those words even today commonplace, superfluous? At the smoking altars of Bethel, amid the gay worshipers and the greedy priests, the words were abhorrent, heretical, blasphemous.

Since his day, many another man has repeated Amos's words.

"Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever chaps that followed—
Came, a dozen men together, never knew my desert fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the waterholes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. *They'll* be called the Pioneers!"

But Amos found God's country of true religion. God's whisper came to him.

Jehovah, who in his rule of justice accepts no substitutes,

admits no exceptions. "Shall horses run up a cliff, shall one plow the sea with oxen? You have imagined that Jehovah is lawless. I tell you that Jehovah is law." To the people, their deity had absorbed into himself the characteristics of the baalim he had supplanted—was impulsive, changeful, passionate, lawless, as the beast, the symbol of their worship. "God is law. You can't any more successfully turn justice to gall than horses can run up a cliff; you can't turn the fruit of righteousness into wormwood any more than you can plow the sea with oxen."

> "City of festering streets by Misery trod,
> Where half-fed, half-clad children swarm unshod,
> Whilst thou dost rear thy splendid fane to God."[7]

The walls of your shrine will fall upon you, unless within those walls you vow to practice justice, and preach that "None should have cake until all have bread." If you break the Law, the Law will break you. "He that will not be ruled by the rudder shall be ruled by the rock."

We turn from the Sermons to the Visions.

Tenth Week, Sixth Day.

c. *Visions,* 7:1 to 9:8a.

A vision of a plague of locusts is followed by that of a terrible drought, which would have eaten up the land and which "devoured the great deep." The third vision removes the scene from "the sphere of nature to the sphere of politics." God's plumbline falls, as it were, down the wall of Israel's civic life, and reveals the crooked, wicked workmanship, the unspeakable obliquity of the nation (7:7-9). In the fourth vision, we see a basket of late fall fruit (*Qaits*). Sharply the prophet speaks: "The *Qäts*—the end is come." It is the end of "the life year" of the Northern Kingdom.

The prophet's last picture of doom is almost incomparably dreadful.

[7] Quoted in the admirable commentary by McFadyen, "A Cry for Justice."

> I saw the Lord standing beside the altar: and he said, Smite the capitals, that the thresholds may shake; and break them in pieces on the head of all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: there shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape. Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall my hand take them; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and it shall bite them. And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.—Amos 9: 1-4.

"Bethel, where our ancestor, Jacob, saw the staircase of the angels; Bethel, where our fathers and we have worshiped with ever increasing splendor and sacrifice; Bethel, to be smitten by the very God (*El*) of Bethel; and we ourselves to be chased, hounded, snatched from Sheol, called down from heaven, discovered amid the robber caves of Carmel, bitten by the serpent of the great deep, smitten by the sword of the enemy!"

The popular theology looked forward to The Day, The Day of Jehovah. In this day, apparently of cosmic cataclysm, the enemies of Jehovah, always identified with the enemies of Israel, were to be overthrown in ruin. The Day would usher in the perfect peace and prosperity of Jehovah's favorite, Israel. Amos, too, looked forward to The Day, but not as a time of supernatural cataclysm. In the noise of the arms of Assyria, he had heard the lion's roar. In the invasion of Assyria or some other foreign foe, an historical event growing out of previous events, he saw the approaching Day of Jehovah. But—another contrast with the popular view—the prophet foresaw The Day as the day not of Israel's triumph, but of her utter desolation. "Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness, and not light." A man flees from a lion, a bear meets him. A

man slips into his house, leans his hand against the wall, a serpent bites him (see 5: 18, 19).

Into the record of the visions there is introduced a passage which has been thought by some to belong to a later period. It deserves special attention:

> Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst.—Amos 8: 11-13.

Pandita Ramabai tells us that after her father and mother and sister had died of starvation, she and her brother wandered from the south of India to the north of India, and back again to Calcutta, seeking sufficiency of food. For four years they suffered from scarcity. In famine times, before the missionary's bungalow may be seen throngs of living skeletons, mothers offering their children for four rupees apiece. The prophecy speaks of a worse famine than any of the material world: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of Jehovah. That would be a famine worth talking about! Do we really believe that? In all the universe let there be no word from God, no word regarding the meaning of history, no word regarding the meaning of the great men who have thought they spoke for God, no word regarding the meaning of personal life and growth, no word regarding the sense of guilt which follows what we call sin, no word regarding death and the after-death: "In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst." Elsewhere the prophecy thinks of God's punishment as executed in the external world. In this passage it enters the realm of the inner life, which was Jesus' home.

Tenth Week, Seventh Day.

In the midst of Amos's visions of doom, there is one

verse worthy the careful thought of us who are separated from our brothers by so many class and caste distinctions:

> Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? Amos 9:7.

Jehovah's providence is not provincial, but universal. "Your God was as much concerned with the migrations of the Philistines whom you hate, of the Syrians whom you hate, as with your migrations, whom alone he is supposed to love. He has indeed known you, chosen you above all the families of the earth, chosen you for salvation on condition of your service of justice."

We are fond of talking about the hand of God which rested on the hand of the helmsman who steered the *Mayflower* across the Atlantic. Is it not possible that our God may be just as much interested in the migration of the Negroes, who came to America before the Pilgrims; as much interested in those later pilgrims, Syrians, Slavs, Italians, whom we discuss as "our immigrant problem"? One is perhaps tempted to read too much into the prophet's question; but one likes to think that had he known Jesus, he might have written words like those of Paul: "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

The last verses of Amos (9:8b-15) apparently belong to a later age. In Amos we have no message of the Messiah, no emphasis on the individual, no proclamation of the afterlife. But the man's message marks the beginning of a new era for religion. "So fundamental," says a writer, "is this recognition of the ethical character of true religion that out of it have grown the positive gains of the entire subsequent development of Israel's religion."

In figures which hold us like a vise, with a courage caught

from Jehovah himself, the prophet risked his life to tell Israel this: Jehovah's reign is a reign of justice, which knows no favorites, accepts no substitutes, admits no exceptions. Obedience to the good and to the good God is life. Disobedience is doom. Jehovah's providence is not provincial, but universal.

Out into the night of Israel's doom Amos looked, desolate, but undismayed.

"It is glory enough to have shouted the name
Of the living God in the teeth of an army of foes;
To have thrown all prudence and forethought away
And for once to have followed the call of the soul
Out into the danger of darkness, of ruin and death.
To have counseled with right, not success, for once,
Is glory enough for one day."

Eleventh Week, First Day.

3. Hosea, the Man and the Message

Read Hosea 1, 4, and 7 to appreciate the passion and power of the prophet.

It has been said of Hosea, "Of all the prophets he best rewards careful study," and again, "He was the most original and constructive of all the religious teachers before the Exile."

As we have seen, Amos was a man of the Southern Kingdom, and therefore at Bethel a semi-foreigner. Hosea was a citizen of northern Israel, a man with a passion for patriotism. Amos resembles in some aspects the "evangelist" who comes to your city for a few days or weeks, leaves the people staggered, stunned, or stirred, but not necessarily repentant. Hosea is the "pastor," who year after year seeks as a good shepherd to lead his flock out into the places where God's green pastures are.

There is much difference of opinion even among recent writers as to the experience of the man Hosea, but the following, more familiar interpretation is believed to be correct.

Hosea married a woman by the name of Gomer. That he believed her at the time of his marriage to be immoral seems improbable, if not incredible. A son is born of the marriage, whom the prophet names Jezreel, after the bloody ground on which the fanatical Jehu massacred the family of Ahab (see discussion, p. 182). "Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (1:4). A second child is born, whom possibly the prophet recognizes as the offspring of his wife's illicit love. "Call her name Lo-ruhamah" (Unpitied). Gomer bears a third child, a son, whom Hosea calls suggestively, "Lo-ammi" (Not my people). At last the faithless wife is completely estranged from her husband and follows her paramour, only to sink into that slavery which in those days as in these awaited the prostitute. While Gomer has given him up, Hosea cannot give her up. In his love and in his pity, taught him by Jehovah, Hosea buys the poor creature at the price of a slave. He cannot take her back at once into the sacred relation of wife to him. There must be long discipline, during which she shall be no man's wife, neither his nor another's (3:3).

> And Jehovah said unto me, Go again, love a woman beloved of her friend, and an adulteress, even as Jehovah loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer of barley, and a half-homer of barley; and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man's wife: so will I also be toward thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim.—Hos. 3:1-4.

> "Weeping blinding tears,
> I took her to myself, and paid the price,
> Strange contrast to the dowry of her youth,
> When first I wooed her; and she came again
> Beneath my roof; yet not for me
> The tender hopes of the departed years,

And not for her the freedom and the love
I then bestowed so freely. Sterner rule
Is needed now. In silence and alone,
In shame and sorrow, wailing, fast, and prayer,
She must blot out the stain that made her life
One long pollution."

But Hosea believed that Jehovah had spoken to him in each experience of anguish.

"Through all the mystery of my years
There runs a purpose which forbids
The wail of passionate despair. I have not lived
At random, as a soul which God forsakes;
But evermore his spirit led me on,
Prompted each purpose, taught my lips to speak,
Stirred up within me that deep love, and now
Reveals the inner secret."

Amos had looked out from his desert watchtower upon the world of politics, and as he looked, he heard "the lion's roar." Hosea looked in upon the ruins of his own home, then past the threshold out upon the dishonor and the dissoluteness of his people, which he knew so well how to describe (see p. 200ff.), and as he looked he knew the pain at the heart of an outraged God, and the love that never dies. "Jehovah said unto me," "Hear the word of Jehovah." So completely did the man identify himself with God that he uttered Jehovah's message as if, to use Jeremiah's bold phrase, he were himself "Jehovah's mouth."

Eleventh Week, Second Day.

Read Hosea, Chapters 10 to 13. We can afford to study with care this prophecy, the chart by which later voyagers found their way in a new world of religion.

We despair of a satisfactory chapter analysis of the book. It has suffered much in transmission. Then, too, it is hard to analyze the cry of a patriot who sees his nation falling to ruin.

Failing a chapter analysis, we attempt a brief analysis of the message.

a. Hosea seeks to win back his people by reminding them of *Jehovah's past attitude toward Israel.* This attitude he describes by the use of three figures.

(1) Jehovah has been as a kindly master to a weary beast. You have seen two drivers on a slippery pavement. One driver's horse stumbles, the driver beats him, the horse plunges to his feet, to slip the more. The other driver gets down from his wagon, eases the horse's heavy collar, places food before him. Even so "I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I set food before them" (11:4).

(2) Jehovah has been as a loving father toward his child. In one of the exquisite passages of the book, we read:

> When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them.—Hos. 11:1-3.

He thinks of the nation as borne in the everlasting arms, taught as a little child to walk, healed by the Father—the Father whose healing touch is, alas, unrecognized.

(3) Jehovah has been as a devoted husband to a foolish and faithless wife. This thought lies near the surface of the entire prophecy. The figure is not new. From the earliest days of Semitic religion, the god of a land was said to be married to the land; he was the baal, the lord, the possessor, the husband of the land, the people. But the union was regarded as physical rather than ethical. The baal granted fertility to the land—the corn, the oil, and the wine. It is the glory of our prophet not that he believed Jehovah to be the husband of Israel, but that he believed Jehovah's love to be an ethical love—which seeks, seeks, evermore seeks the answering love, the "leal-love" of his people.

Israel's response to Jehovah's attitude in the past has been precisely that of the foolish and the faithless. Now and again there has been "light repentance." Quite cheerily they say to each other: "Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up" (6:1). Don't worry. We have slipped in some matter of ritual; we have failed somewhere; but he is *"der liebe Gott,"* temporarily annoyed, but "his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (6:3). "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee?" This "morning cloud" goodness, this "perpetual backsliding"! Israel is like the victim of a virulent disease who will not go to the only physician who can cure him. "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help" (13:9).[8]

Have we ever stopped for one moment to think what would be needful to transform this world into the world ideal? Surely this: that each of us, you, and you, and you, and I, all the way around, should respond with leal-love to God, our help, our saviour. It is our destruction that we refuse. Self-enslavement to the Saviour—this alone is salvation.

Eleventh Week, Third Day.

> I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig-tree at its first season: but they came to Baal-peor, and consecrated themselves unto the shameful thing, and became abominable like that which they loved. As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird: there shall be no birth, and none with child, and no conception. Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, so that not a man shall be left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them! Ephraim, like as I have seen Tyre, is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring out his children to the slayer. Give them, O Jehovah—what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I hated them: because of

[8] For different translation, see Int. Com., Amos and Hosea, p. 398.

> the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of my house; I will love them no more; all their princes are revolters. Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations.—Hos. 9: 10-17.

b. As Hosea turns to *Jehovah's future attitude toward Israel,* he thinks of it as bearing two aspects: outward severity; yearning, passionate, redeeming love.

The outward severity is expressed with a vehemence surpassing, if possible, that of Amos. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (4: 17). Now Jehovah is a lion, tearing and going away; now a leopard, now a bear robbed of her whelps; now a moth, slowly destroying the entire fabric of Israel (13: 7, 8; 5: 12-14). Famine, war, sterility, and "diminution of population" (5: 8; 8: 7; 9: 11-15) await Israel's faithlessness and folly.

But the outward severity is after all consonant with Jehovah's yearning, passionate, redeeming love. This love is sung in words which lay bare the prophet's own heart, as they reveal the heart of God. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? [cities destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah] my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together" (11: 8). Punishment itself is not so much the working out of the law of justice, as with Amos; it is actually the expression of fathomless, endless love.

As the just God of Amos accepts no substitute for justice, so the loving God of Hosea is satisfied with nothing less than his people's answering love, and, mark, his people's outreaching love. No substitutes will serve. Oh, yes, they make idols according to their understanding or their model; great grown-up men kiss the calves (13: 2); and Hosea hurls his scornful laughter at them—God's laughter, it has been called. (Hosea is perhaps the first of the prophets definitely to de-

nounce the "calf cult as contrary to the worship of Jehovah.") Can God be satisfied with that sort of thing? Well, surely he would be satisfied with sacrifice? A young fellow broke his mother's heart by his debaucheries, yet now and then would send her a bunch of La France roses. Wasn't she pleased, satisfied? "I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (6:6). "That which will gain his favor is love . . . in which obedience is emphasized. This love is not love for God as distinguished from love for one's fellow-men, but both."[9]

This is emphatically one of the greatest words of the prophecy, indeed of all prophecy. Would Hosea have abolished sacrifice? He would have assuredly subordinated it. And we may believe that the prophet would have seen with perfect indifference the rains washing out the bloodstains of every sacrificial altar, and about the altar pastures growing for the sheep and cattle saved from sacrifice. In Hosea's thought, upreaching love for God and outreaching love for man—these and these alone satisfy, and these completely satisfy the loving, longing heart of God. Jesus, who knew our prophet well, turned upon the Pharisees, who objected to his eating with publicans and sinners, and bade them learn what the word meant, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13).

But does the prophet see any hope for his people? Usually he sees destruction impending—destruction certain, universal, irremediable

> Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the breath of Jehovah coming up from the wilderness; and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall make spoil of the treasure of all goodly vessels. Samaria shall bear her guilt; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.—Hos. 13:15, 16.

[9] Int. Com., Amos and Hosea, p. 286.

Her ruler shall be as a chip or as foam on the face of the waters. The image of the shrine of Bethel (called Beth-Aven, house of delusion, instead of house of God) will be carried off as a present to Assyria (10:5-7).

Eleventh Week, Fourth Day.

Many of Hosea's words of hope are usually regarded as utterances of a later age. But no great preacher is always and everywhere a prophet of evil. If Hosea dared to hope that his faithless wife might be redeemed through discipline, may he not have cherished a like hope for Israel? Some of the "hope" passages belong to a later time, but the venture of hope is not alien to the heart of Hosea.

We could not well spare the words which assure us that still

"From the gloom his brightness streameth."

Take a word like this: "Behold, I will allure her" (2:14). We speak often of the allurements of sin. We excuse ourselves for vice by saying, "The temptation was too strong for me." Have we ever thought of the allurements of God? A writer has remarked: "There is no place in the world where temptation to evil is so slight as in college, because there is no place in the world where temptation to excellence is so strong." And yet how many a young fellow has thrown up his hands in the presence of college temptations! Think of the allurements of the good and the good of God:

(1) "I will give her . . . the valley of Achor for a door of hope" (2:15). The valley was the dismal ravine of Israel's trouble, due to the treachery of Achan (see p. 125). Now if Israel will but respond to the call of Jehovah's love, the very valley of her humiliation, defeat, disgrace, shall become a door opening out upon a glorious future. You remember the man who said, "I had to be thrown flat on my back before I would look up." How many a drunkard, how many a debauchee, through God's transfiguring grace,

has found the valley of his troubling the door of hope, and gained harmony with his best self.

(2) "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of the heavens, and with the creeping things of the ground. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, saith Jehovah, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth; and the earth shall answer the grain, and the new wine, and the oil; and they shall answer Jezreel" (or Israel) (2:18, 21, 22).

Israel, responsive to the love-call of Jehovah, may hope for harmony with nature. Such harmony St. Francis knew; of such harmony Robert Burns dreamed, though his colter broke the social union between himself and the wee bit mousie, his poor earthborn companion and fellow-mortal.

(3) Again: "I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will make them to lie down safely" (2:18). Harmony between man and man! Kipling writes of "The Peace of Dives":

"Then answered cunning Dives: 'Do not gold and hate abide
At the heart of every Magic, yea, and senseless fear beside?
With gold and fear and hate
I have harnessed state to state,
And with hate and fear and gold their hates are tied.'"

But neither hate nor fear nor gold, nor all of these together, can bring peace to the peoples. The loving God winning the upreaching, outreaching love of men, alone will break the battle out of the land.

Eleventh Week, Fifth Day.

In the last chapter of the book, we have these gracious words: "I will be as the dew unto Israel" (14:5). Thus Hosea, or one who in the later days shared his spirit, looks out beyond the desolation to the restoration of Jehovah's people; God himself coming down upon Israel, as does the night-mist upon the valleys of southern California, quiet,

without advertising, life-giving. It is clear that Hosea himself did not shrink from the thought that continued sin may thwart the first best purpose of God's love. Two little children were discussing hell. Said one: "Hell is a place." "No," said the other: "Hell is a swear-word." Many would accept as comprehensive the latter definition. But George Adam Smith, commenting on Hosea, well says: "Believe then in hell, because you believe in the love of God; not in a hell to which God condemns men of his own will and pleasure, but a hell into which men cast themselves from the very face of his love in Jesus Christ. The place has been painted as a place of fires. But when we contemplate that men come to it with the holiest flames in their natures quenched, we shall justly feel that it is rather a dreary waste of ash and cinder, strewn with snow, for there is no life there; and there is no life there because there is no love, and no love because men in rejecting or abusing her have slain their power ever again to feel her presence."[10]

Shakespeare speaks for humanity when he says:

> "I hate ingratitude more in a man
> Than lying, vainness, babblement, drunkenness,
> Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption
> Inhabits our frail blood."

With ingratitude to the loving God who chose them, led them, saved them, the prophet charged his people; and though he seems to have clutched his hope from despair, he challenged them to repent: "Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap the fruit of love; break up your fallow ground; since there is time to seek Jehovah, to the end that the fruit of righteousness may come to you" (10: 12, as translated by Harper).

We do not know whether Gomer ever became a good woman. We do know that northern Israel went down in real, if not absolute, ruin. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, relying upon Egypt for help, refused to pay tribute to

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[10]Ex. Bi. Hosea, 354.

Shalmaneser IV. Immediately the Assyrian threw his forces against the city, but he did not take it. For three years the plucky Hebrews, in the fortress city so well chosen in the old days by Omri, held out. Shalmaneser died, leaving to his successor the task of starving the citizens and seizing the city. The inscription of Sargon II reads: "Samaria I besieged, I captured. 27,290 of her inhabitants I carried away. . . . My viceroy I placed over them, and imposed the tribute of the former king upon them." Northern Israel lives today, but only in her prophets.

Like Amos, Hosea knows no Messiah (3:5 is probably late), no message of immortality. He is the pastor of the people rather than of the individual. But his is a wonderful new gospel, the gospel of the fathomless, endless, redeeming love of God, which desires nothing else, nothing less, than the leal-love, the goodness of men.

"Does God love,
And will ye hold that truth against the world?"

II. THE PROPHETS OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

Eleventh Week, Sixth Day.

1. Isaiah, Jehovah's Statesman

a. *Uzziah's Reign.*

We should be glad to believe that the words of Amos and Hosea met with some adequate response among the people to whom they were originally addressed. It seems probable that the so-called Ephraimitic documents of the Hexateuch (p. 7) took shape about the time of Amos. The beautiful old stories of Abraham, the faith-ful, and of Joseph, the incorruptible, must surely have made some hearts susceptible to the preaching of the prophets. But the two heroes spoke to a dying nation. We do not know whether either of them lived to see the ruin which they strove to avert. From

falling hands they threw the torch. One man held it high, and broke not faith with them. That man was Isaiah.

Our study takes us down to the Southern Kingdom, and to the reign of Uzziah, or Azariah. A general and statesman of great ability, Uzziah seems to have placed himself at the head of a great coalition, numbering, all told, nineteen states. The purpose of the confederacy was to resist the enforcement of tribute by the Assyrian, Tiglathpileser III. Rogers[11] thinks that the little states might have succeeded but for the cowardice of one of those last kings of Israel, Menahem, who won the scorn of Amos and Hosea. Menahem yielded to the Assyrian, and in token of submission paid him one thousand "talents" of silver. Tiglathpileser then proceeded to overwhelm all the other members of the confederacy, with the exception of the brave little kingdom of Judah. Uzziah greatly increased the prestige of his country, and hopes similar to those born in northern Israel when his contemporary Jeroboam II came to the throne began to awake in the hearts of the people of the south. The book of Chronicles makes a suggestive comment on the man's career: "His name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God" (II Chron. 26:15, 16). The particular trespass mentioned by the Chronicler was probably not regarded as trespass in the time of Uzziah himself; but the record in Kings as well as that in Chronicles declares that Uzziah became a leper (II Kings 15:5).

b. *God's Volunteer.*

6 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord
sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train
filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each
one had six wings; with twain he covered his face,
and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he
did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy,

[11] "History of Babylonia and Assyria," vol. II, p. 119.

holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.—Isa. 6: 1-8.

In the year of Uzziah's death, when all the hopes of all the lovers of Jerusalem were blasted, the young courtier Isaiah "saw the Lord." In the temple, already grown ancient, he beheld in vision the heavenly "archetype" of the earthly temple, the familiar scene transfigured. And there, above his Lord, he saw the seraphim, "all voice and wings," and heard them utter the "Thrice Holy," the *trisagion,* which has found its way into the liturgy of the Christian Church. Overwhelmed by the majesty and holiness of Jehovah, the man cried out, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." But there came to him stricken, Peter-like, by a sense of sin in the presence of awful holiness, the assurance of divine purging. God's fire touched his lips. Trembling, he heard Jehovah's voice, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah did not know what God wanted him to do; he knew only that he wanted to do what God wanted him to do. "Here am I; send me." The words might serve as the motto of the man's biography. His news might be good or bad news. His sole life-question was: "Is this God's news?" From that time on, Jehovah spake unto him with a strong hand, and instructed him that he should not walk in the way of his people. He would not call that a con-

spiracy which other people called a conspiracy, nor would he fear the fears of other people (8: 12).

> "Now things there are that, upon him who sees,
> A strong vocation lay; and strains there are
> That whoso hears shall hear forevermore."

c. *"Sin and Society."*

> Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land! In mine ears saith Jehovah of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands. . . .
>
> Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope; that say, Let him make speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!—Isa. 5: 8-12, 18-23.

During a large part of Isaiah's long career, the condition of society in Judah was not unlike that which we observed in northern Israel in the days of Amos and Hosea (p. 200ff.). We note land-grabbing and liquor drinking, the same arrogance in sin, the same false valuations of right and wrong. There was great wealth over against abject destitution. Large estates took the place of small freeholds. The people

were pushed off the land and off the earth.[12] Superstition, magic from the East, prevailed. At the same time there was a vast deal of temple-treading. Thoughtless, snickering women vied with bribe-taking judges in wantonness *and* worship.

Eleventh Week, Seventh Day.

d. *Jehovah's Love-Song* (from an early open-air sermon).

Read Isa. 5 for characteristic utterances of Isaiah's earlier preaching.

In the regency and brief reign of Jotham, Isaiah swung out into his more active ministry. The passionate, powerful "love-song" of Chapter 5 has been called one of his "early open-air sermons." Note the oratorical tact, and the bite of it:

> Let me sing for my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. . . . For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.—Isa. 5: 1, 2, 7.[13]

e. *Jehovah's Statesman and Judah's Politician* (Isaiah and Ahaz).

Read Isa. 7, an important chapter in the story of heroism and of faith.

> Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the

[12] "Reflect seriously on the possible consequences of keeping in the hearts of your community a bank of discontent, every hour accumulating, upon which every company of seditious men may draw at pleasure" (Burke, quoted by Morley).

[13] For beautiful translation see His. Bi. III, 131.

fuller's field; and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel; thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people: and the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.—Isa. 7:3-9.

Jotham ruled "only two pitiful years, and then left a weakened kingdom to Ahaz," an inexperienced man, possibly not twenty-one years of age.

As men count events, the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion of 734 B. C. might not be considered great. It presented, however, the first of the two crises which called forth Isaiah's master efforts, and must therefore be studied with some care. Tiglathpileser III had a definite and terrible policy, to bring under tribute, or to destroy, all of western Asia. With the customary folly and futility of the kings of northern Israel, Pekah, an assassin, joined forces with the rulers of Syria against Judah. Both kingdoms had petty spites to vent upon the kingdom of the south. The plan was to dethrone the weakling Ahaz, and to put upon the throne their own nominee, the son of Tabeel, possibly a Syrian courtier, who would do their will and foster their anti-Assyrian interests. And it is written of Ahaz, that "his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind" (Isa. 7:2). But like all cowards, he dreaded more a small and immediate danger than a great danger more remote.

So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come

> up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of Jehovah, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him.—II Kings 16:7-9a.

That is, in fear of his northern neighbors, Ahaz had determined to call to his aid Assyria itself—another of those fateful decisions of little men in great authority. As he was inspecting a conduit of "the upper pool," he was met by Isaiah, accompanied by his son. This son bore the significant name, "Shear-jashub" (A remnant shall return—from exile? No—to God; or, possibly, A remnant shall abide). The little politician was met by the statesman. Isaiah spoke first a word of peace: "Don't be anxious; the northern kings whom you fear are but tails of burned out fire-brands. Won't you trust God? *If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established.*"[14] Luther translates the words, *"Glaubet Ihr nicht, so bleibet Ihr nicht."* Another suggests the Scotch idiom, "If ye will not have faith, ye shall not have staith." Still another suggests, "No confiding, no abiding." All scholars agree that we have here one of the great incidents of religious history. One puts it thus: "Never before probably had the distinctively religious principle of faith been so plainly exhibited as the touchstone of character and destiny." Perhaps the finest modern illustration of the contrast between the Ahaz temper and the Isaiah temper is given us in the story of Douglas, "the little giant," and Abraham Lincoln. "Douglas 'don't care,'" said Lincoln, "whether slavery is voted up or down, but God cares, and I care, and with God's help I shall not fail."

"Swiftly the politic goes; is it dark? he borrows a lantern;
Slowly the statesman and sure, guiding his feet by the stars."

The life of policy leads to fear and failure. The life of faith leads to courage and triumph.

[14] In the original there is a play on words, not indicated in the translation.

Twelfth Week, First Day.

Read Isa. 8 for complete narrative of epochal events discussed in this Study.

Ahaz was unconvinced, or, more probably, he had already got his head into the Assyrian noose.

Isaiah spoke again, "Won't you believe my word? Ask me any sort of sign." Ahaz replied, "Oh, no, I won't ask for a sign; I won't tempt God." In hot indignation, the prophet turned upon him: "Won't you ask for a sign? I will give you a sign which you will not like. A maiden[15] shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, in token of the woman's gratitude for her people's deliverance from the invaders of the north. Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, Israel and Syria, before whose kings you cower, will be deserted; but then Jehovah will bring upon you and your father's house days such as have not been since the terrible disruption of Israel (937 B. C.)—even the king of Assyria" (see 7: 10-17).

In a word Isaiah predicts:

(1) The early complete collapse and ruin of Syria and Israel.

(2) The devastation of Judah at the hand of her supposed helper Assyria; the sign of this experience to be a child whose name might well speak of the ushering in of the golden age, but whose fate would be pain and poverty[16] because of the abominable policy of Ahaz.

Isaiah could do nothing with the king. One is reminded of the words of William Watson:

> "The knights rode up with gifts for the king,
> And one was a jeweled sword,
> And one was a suit of golden mail,
> And one was a golden Word.

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[15] Possibly any marriageable woman, possibly the wife of Ahaz.
[16] Uncertainty of text makes meaning uncertain.

He buckled the shining armor on,
And he girt the sword at his side;
But he flung at his feet the golden Word,
And trampled it in his pride.

The armor is pierced with many spears,
And the sword is breaking in twain;
But the Word has risen in storm and fire
To vanquish and to reign."

Isaiah turned from the king to the people. Upon a great tablet he wrote: "Speeds Booty, Hastes Spoil." He gave to his new-born son the name, "Speeds Booty, Hastes Spoil." "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry My father, and My mother, the riches of Damascus [of Syria] and the spoil of Samaria [of northern Israel] shall be carried away before the king of Assyria" (8:4).

In the case of Damascus, the prediction was soon fulfilled. "The whole country was desolated, Tiglathpileser boasting that he had destroyed cities whose inhabitants, numbering thousands, were carried away with all their possessions to Assyria. At last, about the end of 732, Damascus fell into his hands."[17]

The ruin of Samaria, as we have seen (p. 227), was to be postponed for a decade. But the people of Jerusalem, in their little mountain fortress, were not content with the safe, sure, quiet waters of Shiloah, the divine resources of their own; therefore the great "Human Euphrates" would sweep over the land.

Twelfth Week, Second Day.

f. *"The First Appearance of the Church."*

Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion.—Isa. 8:16-18.

[17] Rogers, "Cuneiform Parallels," p. 312.

Unable to influence king or people, what could the prophet do? Surely he had come to the end of his responsibility. To him was left loyalty to his ideals and to his God; to him was left fellowship with the few men who with him trusted Jehovah utterly; to him was left prayer: "I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him."

In this little group of the loyal, the loving, and the prayerful, we have "the first appearance in history of the Church, the first appearance in history of a religious society apart from the forms of domestic and of national life."

From this time on, Isaiah's supreme task was to increase within Jerusalem the number of disciples of Jehovah, to increase the Remnant which, saved from the wreck of society, might yet save Jehovah's religion to the world. The importance of the task we realize in a measure, when we remember that, with the ruin of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B. C., Jerusalem and her suburbs constituted practically the only region in the world in which there was a vital movement toward ethical monotheism.

How hopeless Isaiah's task must have seemed at times is suggested by the idiotic passion of Ahaz for foreign customs and foreign fashions in religion.

> And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar that was at Damascus; and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar: according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus, so did Urijah the priest make it against the coming of king Ahaz from Damascus. And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king drew near unto the altar, and offered thereon.—II Kings 16: 10-12.

The king, on a visit to his Assyrian lord and master then in Damascus, chanced to see an altar which he greatly admired; and he must send to his priestling the design and workmanship of the altar, so that he might have one "just like it,"

in the temple of Jehovah—Isaiah's God, whose train *filled* the temple, and whose glory filled the whole earth. *"Cujus regio, ejus religio."* Among Semitic people the man who held royal power largely controlled the religious life of the people. A king who "made his son to pass through the fire," who worshiped Jehovah according to the infamous rites of the Canaanites, would be followed by many an eager henchman, and by the great mass of the populace as well.

But wherever in "Christendom" today a religious society gathers its group of loyal, loving, prayerful men, that society reaches back historically to the little group of the lovers of Jehovah, who gathered about the prophet, despised and rejected by king and populace.

A writer remarks: "It is safe to say that every man in western Europe and America is leading a different life today from what he would have led, and is another person altogether from what he would have been, had Martin Luther not lived." Had Isaiah slipped away into the crowd, hiding his disappointment and sorrow in his heart, you would be living today a different life in a different world.

g. *Programs of Policy and of Faith.*

Read Isa. 28: 1-19 and compare with the substance and spirit of Amos and Hosea in their prophecies against northern Israel.

In Isa. 28 we hear the prophet pronouncing doom upon the land of Hosea's love. Isaiah never refers to the prophets of the Northern Kingdom; but it may well be that they knew each other, and together faced the last tragedy of Israel with a faith which assuaged their grief.

> Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the

> help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together.—Isa. 31: 1-3.

As statesman, Isaiah had done his best to prevent Judah from entering upon entangling alliances. But now that Assyria had become resistless overlord, Isaiah tried to hold Ahaz and his successor, Hezekiah, to their allegiance, knowing that only by faithful vassalage could Judah survive. In chapter after chapter—for example, 20, 28: 14ff., 30, 31—we see how the prophet strove by precept upon precept, line upon line, to induce his people to stop their everlasting flirtation with Egypt—Rahab, that sitteth still. Now he would use grim satire, now he would beg the peanut politicians of Jerusalem who thought themselves so shrewd to remember that Jehovah also is wise, that they need not expect to fool God. They might think that they could make a covenant with death and a league with hell, and go unpunished; but *"He also is wise."*

Not by breaking covenant with Assyria, not by carrying presents on bunches of camels to Egypt, but by refusing entangling alliances and resting in Jehovah, would Jerusalem win safety. "For thus said the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (30: 15). The advice was not that of a mere mystic, nor that of a peace-at-any-price quietist. It was the advice of a statesman, who knew that Judah's only hope lay in her rejection of futile conspiracies, in her acceptance of Assyria's rule, and in her quiet confidence in Jehovah, who rules and overrules.

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, was a much better, much stronger man than his father. He did not copy the folly of Ahaz in aping foreign customs and foreign kings. But, though a friend of Isaiah, he could not escape the spell of the pro-Egyptian party. In 713-711, Hezekiah joined a con-

federacy of small states, which, relying upon assistance from Egypt, thought to make effective resistance to Sargon of Assyria.[18]

Twelfth Week, Third Day.

> In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it; at that time Jehovah spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. And Jehovah said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. And they shall be dismayed and confounded, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this coastland shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and we, how shall we escape? —Isa. 20: 1-6.

Sargon swept into Ashdod of Philistia, and stamped out the rebellion, but he did not destroy the silly hopes of the confederates. It was about this time that Isaiah preached a sensational sermon, "three years long," walking up and down the streets of Jerusalem, as a captive of Assyria, unfrocked and barefoot. But he preached to deaf ears.

No sooner was Sargon's son Sennacherib upon the Assyrian throne than an elaborate combination of states was formed against him. The "patriotic" party in Judah gained the ascendancy. "The country was ready for a daring stroke against Assyria. Hezekiah became the moving spirit of a rebellion which swept over all the Syrian states." Isaiah was probably the most unpopular man in Judah, the Great Objector.

[18] Rogers, "History of Babylonia and Assyria," vol. II, p. 169.

In 701 B. C. occurred the second crisis, about which gather some of the most important prophecies of Isaiah. The event whose coming he had foreseen through the years arrived, to find the people utterly unprepared. Sennacherib swooped down upon Judah, ruined the land, and then besieged Jerusalem itself, Jehovah's city. In Isaiah *22* some happy incident of the campaign, or the withdrawal of Sennacherib's forces because of the bestowal on them of enormous tribute, filled the people's hearts with the mirth of fools. The housetops were crowded with sightseers. In 1914, when the Turks proceeded through the streets of Jerusalem with the flag which proclaimed a Holy War against the Allies, the pathetic procession was watched by similar throngs gathered on the ancient housetops of the city.

"O thou that art full of shoutings, a tumultuous city, a joyous town" (*22*:2). Blind to the real shame and the real need of the hour, the people proceeded to try to comfort the prophet, bidding him to cheer up. "Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labor not to comfort me for the destruction of the daughter of my people" (*22*:4).

From this point on, the history is very hard to reconstruct. The incident which we have just described accords with the record in II Kings, which reads:

> Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of Jehovah, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of Jehovah, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.—II Kings 18:13-16.

And this account completely accords again with that given

us in the so-called Taylor Cylinder, the Assyrian inscription, in which Sennacherib declares:

"The governors, princes, and people of Ekron, who had cast into iron fetters Padi, their king (who had been faithful to the commands and compact of Assyria), and had given him over to Hezekiah of Judah, in a hostile manner, their hearts feared. They summoned the kings of Egypt, the bowmen, chariots, horses of the king of Melukhkha, forces without number, and they came to their help. . . . With the help of Ashur, my lord, I fought with them and accomplished their defeat. . . . I drew near to Amkaruna (Ekron); the governors and princes who had committed sin I slew, and hung their bodies on poles around the city. . . . Padi, their king, I brought out of Jerusalem, and set him on the throne of dominion over them, and the tribute of my dominion I laid upon him. And of Hezekiah, the Judæan, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six strong cities, with walls, the smaller cities which were around them, without number, by the battering of rams and the assault of engines, the attack of foot-soldiers, mines, breaches, and axes, I besieged and captured them. . . . [Hezekiah] himself I shut up like a caged bird within Jerusalem his royal city. . . . As for Hezekiah, the fear of the majesty of my dominion overwhelmed him. . . . With thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver, precious stones, stibium, uknu-stones, couches of ivory, seats of ivory, elephant-hide, ivory, ushu and ukarinnu wood, diverse objects, a heavy treasure, and his daughters, the women of his palace, male musicians, female musicians he despatched after me to Nineveh, my capital city. He sent his ambassador to give tribute and make submission."[19]

Twelfth Week, Fourth Day.

The Assyrians could lie very cheerfully, when need arose; but their annals join with the Scripture narrative in stating that the Assyrians were tremendously successful in their campaign against Judah and Jerusalem, and that they were bought off only at the price of Hezekiah's humiliating submission. This submission involved not alone enormous tribute, which stripped the very gold from the temple doors, but apparently the deportation of the king's household.

[19] Rogers, "Cuneiform Parallels," p. 342ff.

Where then shall we find place for the subsequent narratives (II Kings 18: 17-19, cf. Isa. 36, 37), which speak of parleys between Sennacherib's representative and the leading men of Jerusalem; which speak of Isaiah's promise of complete vindication and victory for the virgin daughter of Zion?

Some scholars would tell us that all the anti-Assyrian prophecies in Isaiah belong to a later age. Others believe that, after Sennacherib had retired from Jerusalem, he concluded that it would not be wise to leave behind him so strong a fortress; that therefore he broke his covenant, and sought to take the city by diplomacy rather than by siege, by a political rather than a military offensive. Those who hold this view assume that Isaiah's indignation flamed forth because Assyria chose to regard a treaty as "a scrap of paper," that he now promised triumph to his city, God's city. This construction of the history does not seem to leave room for the reformation in morals and religion which Isaiah ever insisted must precede any civic salvation.

The following view is tenable, though not certainly accurate:

In 701 B. C., Sennacherib was assuredly successful, though he did not indeed enter Jerusalem. The people must have said: "Isaiah was right. We did not listen to him, but he was right." With chastened minds, under the leadership of their humiliated and humbled king, they entered upon real and extensive reforms, reforms which were remembered for a hundred years (See Jer. 26: 19). Then considerably later, between 690 and 682, Sennacherib entered upon another western campaign. Our theory assumes that in this campaign Sennacherib again threatened Jerusalem; that at this time, relying upon the thorough reformation of his people, Isaiah became a prophet of civic hope.

h. *The Vindication of Faith.*

Read aloud Isa. 36 and 37, for a dramatic picture of the

conflict of the ages, between the worldling and the soldiers of faith.

Whatever may be the final solution of the problem by the scholars, whatever date we may assume for the interview between the Rabshakeh and the Hebrews (Isa. 36), we may not lose its message. In words so fair and cunning that they would seem about to open the city gates as by a huge magnet, the Assyrian diplomat makes his appeal in the Hebrew tongue to the soldiers on the wall. The threats, the bullying, the promises are all after the persistent fashion of the worldling as he deals with the soldiers of faith. The record goes on to the wondrous vindication of faith.

> And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.—Isa. 37 : 36, 37.

Herodotus tells us that Sethos, an Egyptian king, had set his warrior class against him. "Afterwards therefore when Sennacherib king of the Arabians and Assyrians marched his vast army into Egypt, the warriors one and all refused to come to his aid." But an encouraging dream sent to Sethos by his god impelled him to gather together as many "traders, artisans, and market-people" as he could. With these "he marched to Pelusium, where the passes are by which the country is entered, and there pitched his camp. As the two armies lay opposite one another there came in the night a multitude of field mice, which devoured all the quivers and bowstrings of the enemy and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arms with which to defend themselves." Herodotus goes on to tell of a statue of Sethos, holding a mouse in his hand.[20]

[20] Abbreviated from account by Rogers, "Cuneiform Parallels," who gives the words of Herodotus, p. 346ff.

Pelusium lies among pestilential marshes. In the Orient, the mouse is frequently the very symbol of the plague. In the days of Samuel, the plague-stricken Philistines sent back to Israel the ark of Jehovah, and images of their tumors, and images of mice (I Sam. 6). We know that the plague is today carried by rats and mice. A missionary in Arabia declares that he is glad to see healthy rats abroad, for when the rats begin to hide away, he knows that the plague is at hand. The Indian Government prefers to eliminate the rats, and provides rat-traps in abundance whenever the plague is feared. The curious tradition, then, of Herodotus may be a distorted reminiscence of the fact that Sennacherib's vast army was smitten by the plague, which may well have seemed to the Hebrews Jehovah's death angel to slay the Assyrian and to save his city.

Had the city fallen in Isaiah's time, it is hard to see how the faith for which Isaiah stood could have survived. The city was to live on for more than a century, and when it was destroyed and the people sent into exile, the religion of Jehovah found refuge in the hearts of some of the Remnant left among the ruins, and was, as well, able to bear transportation, exile, and captivity.

Twelfth Week, Fifth Day.

i. *Isaiah's Central Message.*

Read Isa. 1.

No discussion of Isaiah, however brief, could omit the study of the first chapter of the book, which gives us "perhaps better than any other single chapter of the Old Testament the substance of prophetic doctrine, and a very vivid illustration of the prophetic spirit and temper." We seem to listen to Hosea, as the prophet in his great arraignment calls heaven and earth to witness the stupidity and the ingratitude of Jerusalem.

> Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up chil-

dren, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. —Isa. 1:2, 3.

Or again we seem to hear Amos, as Isaiah calls his fellow-citizens rulers of Sodom, people of Gomorrah, and denounces them for substituting ritual for righteousness, and for marrying sin with the solemn meeting.

What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,— I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.— Isa. 1:11-17.

Isaiah here absolutely repudiates that which in the popular mind constituted the very essence of religion, and insists on justice, goodness, loyalty to the character of Jehovah, "the Holy One of Israel," whose holiness is "through righteousness," and whose glory fills the earth.

In this message we catch certain gleams of hope. For northern Israel Isaiah seems never to have cherished any hope whatever. Her ruin was to him no surprise. But, while this first chapter proclaims no Messiah, no hope of immortality, it does offer a chance to the penitent, and does look forward to the day when Jehovah shall smelt out the city's dross, and remove its alloy, when judges like those

of David's "golden age" may lead the Remnant into the life of a city of righteousness, a faithful town.

This man Isaiah must have seemed to the people of Jerusalem to be offering them a new religion. Ahaz had busied himself to reproduce the shape and style of a heathen altar and place it in the ancient temple of Solomon. He had worshiped Jehovah with all the loathsome rites which had been known in the ancient shrines before the days of conquest. Isaiah would have nothing of all this, but offered the people instead the religion of loyalty to God and man. Isaiah's God was not limited by the boundaries of Palestine. Assyria was the rod of Jehovah's anger, the staff of His indignation. If Assyria should boast of victory, it would be just as if the axe should boast itself against him that heweth therewith, as if the rod should wield them that lift it up. The mightiest empire of the world was to Isaiah but a club in the hand of his God (10:5, 15). And Isaiah's God could not conceivably be interested in the sacrificial blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats, nor could he be satisfied with images of silver and of gold.

Isaiah did not break many new paths; he greatly widened those already broken. He spoke to his people, and speaks to us, a message which the world may not lightly forget:

(1) Faith is the touchstone of personal and national character and destiny.

(2) Out of the midst of general civic ruin there arises, will arise, a remnant consisting of the loyal, the fraternal, and the prayerful, saved to serve the ends of a just and loving God.

(3) Jehovah is wise to thwart the shrewdness of his enemies, and holy, "made holy through righteousness."

Greater than the message of his words is the message of the prophet's manhood. It was not easy to stand alone against the crowd. "Was there ever a collegian who turned his hat up, and his trousers down, when custom prescribed the contrary?" It is not easy to stand alone when patriotic fears and patriotic hopes invite weather-vane politicians to urge

false alliances and foolish wars. "Safe in himself as in a fate," safe rather in his God, whose volunteer he was, Isaiah became the leader of the prophet-statesmen of the world who have guided their feet by the stars.

Words used of Cromwell may be used with even greater pertinence of Isaiah: "Firm in his belief in direct communion with God, a sovereign in power unseen, hearkening for the divine voice, his steps guided by the divine hand, yet he moved full in the world, and in the life of the world."

It thrills a man to remember that no man or group of men have the monopoly of prophecy. The man who is not afraid of the crowd, who in the paths of the world is guided by his God, may speak God's message.

"There's a dead hum of voices, all say the same thing,
And our forefathers' songs are the songs that we sing;
And the deeds by our fathers and grandfathers done
Are done by the son of the son of the son,
And our heads with contrition are bowed.
Lo, a call for a man who shall make all things new
Goes down through the throng! See! He rises in view!
Make room for the man who shall make all things new!—
For the man who comes up from the crowd.

And where is the man who comes up from the throng
Who does the new deed and who sings the new song,
And who makes the old world as a world that is new?
And who is the man? It is you! It is you!
And our praise is exultant and proud.
We are waiting for you there—for you are the man!
Come up from the jostle as soon as you can;
Come up from the crowd there, for you are the man—
The man who comes up from the crowd."
—Sam Walter Foss, "The Man from the Crowd."

Up he comes from the crowd to hear God's word which shall bless the crowd, and make the old world new.

Twelfth Week, Sixth Day.

2. Micah, the Village Prophet

Read Micah 1 and 3, noting the attitude of the village prophet as compared with Isaiah, the prophet of the city.

a. *Bad Times and Bad Men.*

Isaiah was a man of the city, familiar with embassies and courts and kings. He identified himself with Jerusalem as did Savonarola with Florence. From the battlements of the capital he saw and knew the meaning of the Assyrian advance. Micah was a villager, who saw the forces of Sennacherib plowing their terrible furrow through the little towns and hamlets which he knew and loved. Probably to the village-dweller in Europe the expected burning of Paris or Berlin would not bring such emotions as would the actual desolation of some neighboring town, whose quiet spires in the distance have been as familiar as the quiet trees, whose quiet homes have sheltered married sons and daughters and dear friends.

So Micah wails for the villages which become the victims of Assyrian atrocities. He betrays a love of punning and assonance which seems to us to cheapen the dignity of his message; but it is to be remembered that "puns were not for the Hebrews what they are with us, mere plays on words, for as the name had a relation to the thing, which transcends our perception, so there was in the similarity of sound between two words a mystical connection of the things themselves. *'Nomen est omen'* is a conception that was developed on the soil of antiquity."

In his temper, Micah seems to combine to a large degree the qualities of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. He is a prophet of the poor. With a villager's eyes he sees the crimes of the capital. He goes further than Amos in his denunciation of civic rulers. Cannibals, he calls them.

> And I said, Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice? ye who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry unto Jehovah, but he will not answer them; yea, he will hide

> his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings.—Micah 3:1-4.

He scores the prophets who cry, "Peace, peace," but proclaim a holy war if you don't keep their mouths filled.

He pierces the pseudo-patriotism which tells the prophet not to prophesy such harsh and unpleasant things: "Is Jehovah impatient? Are we not all honorable men? Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us" (see 3:11). With Isaiah in his sternest messages, Micah proclaims certain doom to Jerusalem, to the very temple itself. "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest" (3:12).

b. *Real Religion.*

Micah's original message has undergone many changes. The prophecy as we have it contains one passage which, whether by Micah or by some later, nameless prophet, deserves to be learned not merely by memory, but by heart.

> Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Micah 6:6-8.

One scholar speaks of these as the greatest words in the Old Testament. Another says, "These verses may raise a well-founded title to be counted as the most important in prophetic literature." When President Eliot of Harvard was asked by the authorities to suggest eight inscriptions to be placed under as many allegorical statues in the Congressional Library, he bade them write this verse beneath the statue symbolizing religion: "What doth the Lord require of

thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The people whom the prophet addresses have apparently come to suspect the value of the sacrifices which were of the very essence of their religious practice. "How shall we, how can we, win Jehovah's favor? If we should multiply our sacrifices, and pour out ten thousands of rivers of oil, if we should burn our firstborn children in sacrifice for our sins, would Jehovah be pleased?" What is the prophet's answer?

Twelfth Week, Seventh Day.

(1) "Do justly." Amos and Isaiah both would have said the same thing. But what does that mean? Professor Nash reminds us of the definition in Justinian's Code: "Justice is the steady and abiding will to give to each man what belongs to him." But what belongs to each man? Surely at least those physical, mental, and spiritual possessions which will render him the most efficient possible servant of the social welfare. It would be easier for the American people to buy up the whole olive crop of California, and to pour out all the oil before the altar; it would be easier for us to buy up the entire cattle market of the Argentine for sacrifice, than to do justice; unless—unless we have learned first to respond to the third requirement.

(2) "Love kindness." Hosea would have said the same thing. It is worth remembering that flirtation is not love. It is one thing to flirt with kindness at Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is quite another thing to love kindness. How searching, too, is the suggestion of the union between justice and kindness. Some men are just, but are not kind. More men are kind, but are not just. No people in the world love better than we democratic Americans to be benevolent despots. To be just *and* kind!

(3) "Walk humbly with thy God." Isaiah would have said the same thing. Thank God, obedience to this last command makes possible obedience to the first two. Bidden to do

justly, trying to realize what justice in the twentieth century means, we think obedience is impossible. When the command of kindness is added, obedience seems doubly impossible. But we are bidden to walk "modestly" with God. That surely is an easy command to obey. Yes, if one walks near enough to God. The soldiers marching nearest the commander are modest, the boasters are in the rear ranks. And now we discover that obedience to this command makes obedience to the others a corollary. Two cannot walk together unless they are agreed. If one walks modestly with God, one cannot walk in the path of injustice and unkindness, for God is walking the other way.

We should like to know more about Micah. It is certain that his message flew right in the face of the clean-cut convictions of his contemporaries. They asked in perfect good faith: "Is not Jehovah among us?" The temple of Jehovah was in a very literal sense the place of the soles of Jehovah's feet. If the city is destroyed, the temple will be sacked, and our ever-victorious deity will be carried off to Assyria—whipped, dethroned, exiled. The very suggestion is at once treason and blasphemy. And it is almost certain that Micah was labeled traitor, blasphemer.

In his prophecy there is one bit of vivid self-portraiture. Contrasting himself with the false prophets and seers, he says: "As for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (3:8). It has been well said: "We have here a revelation of the psychology of prophecy, a sense namely of inner illumination, and the discrimination and strength to speak God's word to men."

c. *The Prophet's Influence.*

It is good to recall that, along with Isaiah, this villager Micah brought about a reformation in Jerusalem which went beyond externals, and transformed lives. It is also good to recall that the experience of this brave and modest man was

to save the life of a greater prophet a hundred years later. In Jeremiah 26: 16-19 we have the story of one of the many conflicts which Jeremiah, the soldier of the unshielded heart, was to enter:

> Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Jehovah our God. Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? did he not fear Jehovah, and entreat the favor of Jehovah, and Jehovah repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus should we commit great evil against our own souls.—Jer. 26: 16-19.

The "hope" passages in our book of Micah belong perhaps to a later period. One of these, Micah 7: 8, is used most skilfully by John Bunyan in "Pilgrim's Progress": "As God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, 'Rejoice not against me O mine enemy! when I fall, I shall arise'; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back as one that had received his mortal wound."

Micah's viewpoint as a villager is new; his figures of speech are new and picturesque. In his characterizations of God and sin and duty, he does not seem to go beyond his predecessors. But in none of them do we find so concise a summary of the essential elements of all true religion as in our present book of Micah.

Concluding Note

To conclude our work with the eighth century prophets:

these men have given us a conception of Jehovah as a deity, who governs by a justice which plays no favorites, accepts no substitutes, admits no exceptions; a deity whose providence is not provincial but practically, if not theoretically, universal. They have given us a conception of Jehovah as a God whose justice is consistent with endless, fathomless, redemptive love, a love which can be satisfied with nothing less than leal-love. They have given us the conception of Jehovah as a God who, while just and loving, is also wise to carry through his purposes by the cooperation of loyal, loving, prayerful men—in the life of the city if the city be worthy, regardless of the city if the city be unworthy; a God who is holy with the holiness of righteousness, and glorious with a glory that fills the earth. They (or in their name, worthy successors) have given us the conception of Jehovah as a God who, though an Infinite Demander, requires nothing more of his people than justice, kindness, and modest companionship with him.

In the spring of 1917 the National School Camp Association issued an appeal to the entire population of the United States to "stop and think" for one minute at noon on Memorial Day. The suggestion seemed at first almost grotesque, but it was worthy of universal adoption. One minute *a day* spent by the men of America with the eighth century prophets, and another minute a day spent with the messages of the Master—who knowing well the prophets, filled full their messages—would suffice to re-create the life of America.

Men like these four men are the strengtheners of the heart of mankind.

"Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.

Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God."
—Matthew Arnold, "Rugby Chapel."

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Dr. Fosdick quotes George Eliot's description of Hetty in Adam Bede: "Hetty was one of those numerous people who have had god-fathers and god-mothers, learned their catechism, been confirmed, and gone to church every Sunday, and yet for any practical result of strength in life or trust in death, have never appropriated a single Christian idea or Christian feeling." Compare Hetty's religion with that of the average Israelite in Amos's day.

2. When Octavia Hill went to a house-owner to ask him to improve his tenements, on the ground that such improvements would be profitable to him, he replied: "O mum, it's not the rents I depend on for my profits, it's the funerals." Could that man have been a member in good and regular standing of the religious community in Bethel?

3. How would the popular religion of the days of Amos be affected by the victories or defeats of Israel, by large harvests or crop failures? How would Amos interpret such events?

4. Consider what a famine means, and then answer honestly whether you believe a famine of bread or a famine of hearing the word of Jehovah would be worse. Give reason for answer.

5. It has been claimed that there is no love in Amos. Can you disprove the statement?

6. Would you say that a man today, who shared Isaiah's sanity and sagacity, could have a vision comparable with his?

7. Do you believe that if a nation today should live the life of absolute trust in a just, powerful, loving, universal God, it would certainly survive and prosper?

8. If Isaiah tried to keep Ahaz from calling in Assyrian

aid, why did he object to Hezekiah's proposed resistance to Assyria?

9. Characterize the religion which Isaiah thought could satisfy God.

10. If a typical citizen of Jerusalem had believed the words of Isaiah and of Micah, what changes would his belief have wrought in his conception of God, of religion, of duty?

CHAPTER IX

Politics and Prophecy in the Days of Judah's Decline and Fall

Introductory

Thirteenth Week, First Day.

We believe it was Jacob Riis who suggested that the moral history of New York City may be illustrated by an upward-moving spiral. As a circle, or cycle, of the history is completed, and one attempts to measure the advance, it seems as if a given circle were but a hair's breadth above the previous circle; but it is *above* and not *below*. The movement is one of ascent—often interrupted, often hesitant—but ascent, not descent. One is reminded of the figure as one studies the moral and religious history of Israel. In the period covered by our present chapter, we mark at first steady progress under the skilled and strong hand of Isaiah. Then comes a grievous stoppage, in the reactionary rule of Manasseh. Once more the spiral sweeps up, through the prophetic activities of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Jeremiah, to the reformation under Josiah. Another tragic interruption we shall note as we study the religious degradation and political death of Judah in the days of Jehoiakim and his successors. But even at the last, in the prophecy of Habakkuk, "doubtful in the midst of his faith, faithful in the midst of his doubt," and again in the prophecy of Jeremiah, we see a movement upward, which will not be stopped even by the Exile itself.

1. Manasseh, the Reactionary

Through the early years of the seventh century Hezekiah

seems to have wrought to consolidate the reforms demanded by Isaiah. To the last, Isaiah himself

> "held his place—
> Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
> Held on through blame and faltered not at praise,
> And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
> As when a kingly cedar green with boughs
> Goes down with a great shout upon the hills
> And leaves a lonesome space against the sky."

Tribute to Assyria steadily drained the resources of the little state of Judah, vassalage was ever irksome to the highlanders in their brave old fortress of Jerusalem. The city of Jehovah's throne, the city which alone did honor to his name, surely ought to live in perennial peace and prosperity, the inviolate daughter of Zion. History banished the fair dream.

In 686 (692?) B. C., Hezekiah was succeeded by his son Manasseh. Sennacherib, the Assyrian despot, died, but his death did the little states of the west no good. Esarhaddon was a strong and astute ruler. He besieged and leveled to the ground the city of Sidon. He dared even to advance against Egypt, the ancient seat of civilization, luxury, and power. To the amazement of the world the Assyrian laid waste the beautiful city of Memphis, and set up rulers of his selection over all the "nomes" of Egypt. Nor was Esarhaddon content with the triumphs of the field. He rebuilt on a magnificent scale the ancient city of Babylon. He died in 668 B. C., but was immediately succeeded by his son Ashurbanipal. With all their watchful waiting, the patriots of Jerusalem saw no chance to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Ashurbanipal did engage in wasteful foreign and civil war, but he found leisure to build up a vast library of some ten thousand tablets, and to foster the arts of peace, as those of war. The Judean hope of liberty proved illusory.

While Manasseh's long reign was apparently a period of reasonable security and social well-being, it witnessed a violent moral and religious reaction. It probably seemed

evident to Manasseh that Jehovah alone was not strong enough to save the state. The prophetic party may well have aroused the king's wrath. With grim determination, Manasseh entered upon a course which Isaiah would have counted utter apostasy.

> And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made an Asherah, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of Jehovah, whereof Jehovah said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Jehovah. And he made his son to pass through the fire, and practised augury, and used enchantments, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. And he set the graven image of Asherah, that he had made, in the house of which Jehovah said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever.—II Kings 21:2-7.

a. He "reared up altars for Baal, and made an Asherah, as did Ahab king of Israel." The reference to Ahab suggests that Manasseh may have reintroduced into Jerusalem the worship of the Tyrian baal, Melkart, which had been discredited in the days of Athaliah. If he did not differentiate his Baal from Jehovah, he worshiped him with all the infamous rites of the "heathen." He "made his son to pass through the fire"; and though some scholars would soften the meaning of the words, they probably mean not simply a symbolic purification by fire, but the actual sacrifice of his son as a burnt-offering to his deity.

b. Again, he "worshiped all the host of heaven," and in the very courts of the house of Jehovah he built altars for

his devotions. The worship of the heavenly bodies was common to the whole Semitic world, but was pursued with specially elaborate ceremonialism in Assyria. Assyria was the world's mistress. The stars in their courses fought for those who acknowledged the stellar control of the affairs of nations. Assyria was arrogant, yes; hateful, yes; but successful. Assyria feared no foreign nation and no foreign god. There is a curious incident recorded in one of Esarhaddon's inscriptions. In former wars, the Assyrians had captured the gods of the king of Aribi. Now the king of Aribi prayed Esarhaddon to return to him his gods, and the great king writes: "I showed him favor, and repaired the broken portions of those gods; the power of Ashur my lord, as well as my name I inscribed upon them, and gave them back to him." Certainly the great king would repair and return the gods of the vassal king, as a bully might return to a crying child his stolen toys; but he must first contemptuously chisel his own name and the name of his big god upon the idols. If a king were really seeking the progress of his state, he would do well to win the support of the mighty gods of Assyria. The worship of the heavenly bodies promoted by Manasseh was contagious. Soon the flat housetops of Jerusalem became shrines to the host of heaven.

c. He "used enchantments, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards." The author of the record apparently believed in the reality of the enchantments and of the familiar spirits, and in the actual witchery of the wizards, but he knew that the worshiper of Jehovah could have nothing to do with these ways of the heathen.

d. Moreover Manasseh "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (II Kings 21:16). The fierce and fanatical character of the reaction revealed itself in a bloody persecution of the prophetic party. One is reminded of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, 1572, in which, at the instigation of Catherine de' Medici, perhaps 50,000 Protestants of France were slain. As France then lost some of her noblest sons and daughters,

so in Manasseh's day Judah, in her modest massacre, probably lost many of her noblest and best.

History records many stories of religious reactions. Shortly after Constantine had made Christianity the religion of his empire, Julian the Apostate openly avowed himself a pagan. "The symbols of paganism and of the imperial dignity were so artfully interwoven on the standards of the legions that they could not pay the usual homage to the emperor without seeming to offer worship to the gods; and when the soldiers came forward to receive the customary donative, they were required to throw a handful of incense on the altar." Julian himself joined with his love of philosophy "a devotion to the old superstitions, was greatly given to divination, and was noted for the number of his sacrificial victims."

On quite a different plane of culture, the people of Madagascar passed through a not dissimilar period of reaction. Missionaries came to the island in 1818. For fifteen years Christianity went on conquering and to conquer. Then heathenism came back. For twenty-six years it was a capital offense to be a Christian; and from "the rock of hurling" the believers in Jesus were cast into the sea. It was the queen's will. It is, however, to be noted that Manasseh did not consciously renounce Jehovah worship. It is quite certain that he still paid homage to Isaiah's God, but saw in him only one deity of his enlarging pantheon.

So far as one may judge, Manasseh carried the great mass of the people with him. Few facts are more startling than the persistence of ancient superstitions and of heathen customs. A university man of India may loudly proclaim his agnosticism among his fellow-students, and bow reverently with his family in devotion to the gods of his village. One thinks of China as casting her idols into the river, "facing the dawn"; but one reads as well of a new temple to cost $230,000, nearly twice as much as its predecessor. One reads the words of a careful missionary: "Idolatry is not dying out even in centers where strenuous missionary efforts have been pursued, and the power of the Gospel has mightily worked.

Here within sight of K——, where mission work has been going on uninterruptedly over fifty years, and where there are more than 1,000 children in our schools, three churches, a Christian hospital, and daily distribution of gospels and tracts, the rankest heathenism has been developing."[1]

Thirteenth Week, Second Day.

On the front wall of the New York Public Library, there is a beautiful quotation from one of the apocrypha, I Esdras, which reads, "But above all things, truth beareth away the victory." Yes, but truth *seems* as often to be upon the scaffold of the victim as on the throne of the victor. For practically half a century the truth, for which Isaiah fought and died, was apparently whipped in the very city of Jehovah.

In 641 B. C. Manasseh was succeeded by a son after his own heart, Amon. The assassination of the new king in 639 B. C. brought to the throne his son Josiah, eight years old.

The name of the young son was of good omen. It means "Jehovah supports." It suggests the possibility that in the household of his idolatrous father there were influences favorable to exclusive Jehovah worship and to the prophetic party. The reforming tendencies of the king probably appeared early. But before we study Josiah's great Reformation, let us turn to consider a prophet whose work seems to have been mainly done in the earlier years of Josiah's reign.

2. Zephaniah, Aristocratic Foe of Aristocrats

Read Zeph. 1 for vivid portrayal of the sin—and the doom—of Jerusalem.

In none of the great "killing times" of history have all the friends of truth been killed. In Manasseh's time and probably in his capital, a boy grew to maturity, who is styled "the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah." It seems probable that the long genealogy

[1] *The Missionary Review of the World*, July, 1918, p. 506.

would trace our prophet's lineage to King Hezekiah himself. The prophet's name, Zephaniah, means "Jehovah is protector," or "The one whom Jehovah hides"; and may give hint of his possible concealment as a child from the royal persecution.

a. *The Prophet's World.*

As the prophet looks out upon his world in the early days of Josiah, he marks the prevalence of foreign customs in tailoring and in worshiping. There are those "who are clothed in foreign apparel," taking the last hint from the styles of other lands, marking thus "a decadence of the national spirit," marking, too, their wanton extravagance, and the adoption of foreign ways in religion as in dress. Then there are those who "leap over the threshold" apparently of the temple itself, in obedience to a widespread superstition which conceived the threshold "as a favorite abode of demons and spirits." Then there are those who swear to Jehovah and swear by Malcam (or Milcom). "The recently discovered papyri of Elephantine" show "a Jewish woman in a legal transaction taking oath both by Yahweh and by Sati, an Egyptian god."[2] This was as late as the fifth century B. C.

The double oath meant of course divided allegiance, a sort of pernicious "double citizenship" in the kingdom of Jehovah and in the kingdom of a heathen deity. From his housetop in the evening the prophet sees other housetops illumined by the lighted altars of sacrifice to the host of heaven. He walks out into the street and hears the conversation of men, "who are thickening upon the lees," in "the putrescence of respectability," men who have come to a totally new position, who say "Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil" (1:12). Such a remark would have been incredible to the Israelite of the days of Amos, or of the days of Isaiah. "What! Is not Jehovah strong to do good and evil? Do you mean to tell us that the God who brought us up out of Egypt, who led us through the Red Sea, who drove out before us

[2] Int. Com., Zephaniah, p. 189.

our enemies, who gave us great kings, who set his throne in our city, is now grown impotent? Are we not necessarily the prime favorites of the mighty God, Jehovah?" But there is a new atmosphere in Jerusalem now. The long years have withered hope and faith. In these men who proclaim the indifference or impotence of Jehovah we have essentially the thought of the Lotos-Eaters, whose gods are careless of mankind, and smile in secret,

"looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands."

But the prophet, as he passes from the street, turns to the homes of royalty, to which his own rank would admit him, and there he sees those who not only ape foreign customs, but "fill their master's house with deceit and violence." Show me the God you worship, and I will tell you the kind of man you are. Worshipers of foreign dress and foreign deities will not scruple to use fraud and force when occasion calls.

Thirteenth Week, Third Day.

b. *The Prophet's Message.*

What will the prophet say to this world of his?

> The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements.—Zeph. 1 : 14-16.

His terrible words have found their way into one of the hymns of the medieval Church, *"Dies irae, dies illa."*

Like his predecessors in the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms, Zephaniah usually thinks of the Day of Jehovah

as the issue of a series of historical events, involving, not the exaltation, but the doom of the kingdom at the hands of a definite political foe. The foe whom the prophet expects to serve as the rod of Jehovah's anger upon Jerusalem is probably a new foe, the Scythians. "Bursting forth from behind their mountain barriers in the dark mysterious north, these barbarians poured down upon the ancient seats of luxury and civilization, spreading terror as they moved. They penetrated to the borders of Egypt, where Psammetichus king of Egypt met them, and dissuaded them from advancing further, by prayers and gifts. For twenty-eight years, Herodotus tells us, they held sway in Western Asia, and turned everything upside down by their overbearing insolence and unrestrained plundering." These "Huns" of an earlier day probably stirred to flame the spirit of prophecy both in Zephaniah and his contemporary Jeremiah. The foe then is new, but the prophet's thought is not new. Sin means punishment; punishment is to come through the onslaught of a well-known and greatly-feared army of aliens.

But there appears once or twice in our prophecy a type of thought not characteristic of the prophets whom we have studied. It is illustrated by the passage Zeph. 1:2, 3: "I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground, saith Jehovah. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the face of the ground, saith Jehovah."

The popular theology looked forward to a *Day* when by miraculous cataclysm all the foes of Israel should be swept from the earth, when all the difficult elements of life should be transfigured, when Israel should rule—supreme and supremely happy. Now this popular "apocalyptic" (unveiling of supernatural events) enters prophecy in obtrusive fashion. We shall observe later its unwholesome tendencies. But—and here we note the stern morality of the prophet—Zephaniah does not exempt from the great catastrophe "the chosen people." Indeed, he feels sure that in the world

cataclysm the self-complacent citizens of Jerusalem are themselves to be engulfed. Our prophet does not linger long in the unhealthful atmosphere of apocalyptic. He concerns himself largely with forces now operating upon the earth. He sees Jehovah as a kind of divine Diogenes, searching the city with a lamp to find, not the honest man, but the sinners, the judges who are ravening wolves, the prophets who are light and treacherous persons. With the certainty of the returning day-dawn does Jehovah every morning establish justice (3:5).

Zephaniah is not perhaps a prophet of the first rank, but there is a frightful realism about his message that grips one. He uses for example the ghastly figure of Jehovah's sacrifice. God summons his guests to the woeful feast, and the victims of the sacrifice are—who? who but the people of Jerusalem themselves, God's chosen ones (1:7). We shall hear more of that figure of speech in the later prophets. There must have been a terrifying quality about the man—this aristocrat who doomed the aristocracy.

"You must become fanatic, be a wedge, a thunderbolt,
To smite a passage through this close-grained world."

What impression he made upon his time, we do not know. He may have been one of those who smote "a passage" for the Great Reformation.

Thirteenth Week, Fourth Day.

3. The Discovery of Deuteronomy

Read Deut. 28 and 30, most noble expressions of the Hebrew faith, among the words which worthily crown the Deuteronomic legislation.

> And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said,

> Thy servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen that have the oversight of the house of Jehovah. And Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, Go ye, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found; for great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.—II Kings 22:8-13.

As the officials of Josiah were cleansing and repairing the temple, so long desecrated or neglected, there was discovered in the temple debris "the book of the law." This book included certainly the chapters of Deut. 12 to 26, and possibly 5 to 26 or 28. As has been suggested (p. 8), the book is the product of prophetic and of priestly influences.

Again and again we hear the voice of prophecy at its best: "Ye are the children of Jehovah your God" (Deut. 14:1). "Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God" (18:13). The prophet's fierce message of uncompromising loyalty to Jehovah we hear:

> If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death,

and afterwards the hand of all the people.—Deut. 13: 6-9.

Elijah might have penned those words.

As the book brings us the prophet's message of devotion to Jehovah, so it brings us—now in law, now in exhortation—the prophet's message of devotion to justice and kindness. The king is not to multiply horses to himself, nor multiply wives to himself, nor greatly multiply to himself silver and gold; his heart is not to be lifted up above his brethren (17: 15-20). "Thou shalt not wrest the justice due to the sojourner, or to the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge; but thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee thence" (24: 17, 18).

It would be easy to quote law after law, expressing the prophet's noblest thought of kindness to the weak, the poor, the enslaved, the sojourner—yes, to the beasts of the field and the little birds of the air.

The priestly influence we note in the laws regarding fasts and feasts, regarding those who may lawfully enter the "assembly of Jehovah," and regarding the treatment of Levites.

The book gives us a vivid picture of the state of morals and religion at the time when it was promulgated by Josiah, for the king evidently regarded the book as the very *torah*, or law of God himself. Both in morals and religion, the teaching of Deuteronomy is defective. There are laws which assume polygamy and slavery; which forbid the bastard to enter the sanctuary, forgetful of the fact that "there are no illegitimate children, but rather illegitimate parents." There are laws forbidding certain foreigners to enter the temple, laws forbidding Hebrews to exact interest of brother Hebrews, but permitting them to exact interest of foreigners. Laws there are which give definite instructions as to the slaughter of the males of a city which defies Israel. There is a law which forbids the Hebrew to eat

of anything that dieth of itself, but "thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner" (14:21). There is a glorious law, forbidding the children to be put to death for the sins of the parents (24:16), but another law, which commands the Hebrews *not* to seek the peace or prosperity of the Ammonites and Moabites, because of the discourtesy of their ancestors to the Israelites, as they were pressing on toward the Promised Land[3] (23:3-6).

> Ye shall surely destroy all the places wherein the nations that ye shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: and ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and ye shall destroy their name out of that place. Ye shall not do so unto Jehovah your God. But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill-offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock: and there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee. Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.—Deut 12:2-9.

Josiah discovered in the book certain laws which neither he nor his fathers had observed. These laws, possibly inspired both by priestly and prophetic influence, sought first, the destruction of all shrines dedicated to Jehovah, outside of Jerusalem itself; and consequently, second, the centralization of all religious worship in Jerusalem.

The legislation was obviously drastic in the extreme. Such

[3] Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 218ff.

sacrifices as Gideon offered in the olden times, as Samuel offered at the high place (I Sam. 9: 14), were no longer lawful. Should Elijah have risen from the dead, he could no longer make acceptable sacrifices to Jehovah on Mount Carmel. Indeed, the newly discovered legislation would largely nullify the old law of Hebrew religious practice: "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in every place where I cause my name to be remembered, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee" (Exodus 20: 24).

Was the legislation warranted? We shall see the dangers incident to its enactment. The priests of the baser sort, serving in the ancient temple, would welcome the change which would give them and their brothers in Jerusalem the monopoly of the administration of organized religion throughout the entire kingdom.

But the nobler priests and the prophetic party may well have cooperated in the promulgation and enforcement of the legislation, believing that by the destruction of the local shrines they could eliminate every trace of heathenism, every trace of that "polyjahvism" (see p. 159), which was nourished at the high places. They doubtless hoped, too, to banish from the realm the gross immoralities which had been consecrated by their long association with the scattered sanctuaries.

Thirteenth Week, Fifth Day.

4. Josiah's Reformation

Read II Kings 23, for brief but telling narrative of Josiah's ruthless reformation and tragic death.

Josiah's zeal was not sicklied o'er by any doubts or queries. He began first to clean his own doorstep. He brought out of the temple all of the vessels that had been made for Baal, and for all the host of heaven, and these he burned. He put down the idolatrous priests, who fattened on the sins of

the e. He drove the sacred prostitutes from the pre-
cin the temple. He defiled the place of human sacri-
fice royed the chariots of the sun, and removed the
hor dicated to the sun. But Jehu himself might have
gor ar as this.

J went further. "He brought all the priests out of the
citi Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests
had ned incense" (II Kings 23:8). He went up to
Bet which, even after the ruin of the Northern Kingdom,
was a place of religious resort, "and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat . . . had made, even that altar and the high place he brake down" (II Kings 23:15). He is recorded to have carried his crusade to various cities of Samaria, there to destroy the high places, and to kill "all the priests of the high places that were there" (II Kings 23:20). That is, he aimed to make impossible, not alone heathen worship, but any organized worship of Jehovah outside Jerusalem itself.

Josiah's reformation was a dangerous adventure of faith. As it ruined hundreds of village shrines, it cut away the trellises upon which the religious life of thousands of people had been climbing for years. It meant the financial ruin or the subordination, the degradation, of hundreds of village priests who had cared with patient zeal for their shrines, and ministered with real, though superstitious, comradeship to the religious life of the common people.

Moreover, the new ecclesiastical monopoly gained by the Jerusalem sanctuary may well have emphasized the very tendency to religious externalism which Amos and Isaiah had persistently attacked. For a good many years now men have tried, and failed, to achieve personal and national salvation by legislation.

But the God who makes the wrath of men to praise him makes also to praise him their blunders and half-mistakes, their purblind struggles to achieve the divine will, and their partial apprehension of the divine revelation. As Josiah blasted his way through cherished local traditions, super-

stitions, and cults of the Jehovah of Bethel and the Jehovah of Samaria and the Jehovah of this or that high place, men throughout the realm, with reluctance and yet with certainty, rose toward the conception of Jehovah as one—the one leader and lover of all the Hebrews. The centralization of worship in Jerusalem, with all its dangers, meant to multitudes of men an elevation of the conception of God.

One day the ultimate manifesto of true religion would be uttered in Palestine: "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers" (John 4:21, 23). Neither priests nor people in Josiah's day would or could have sympathized with that utterance. We shall study one prophet of the time who could have appreciated it.

Our Lord has given us the right to sit in judgment, in his spirit, upon every law of the Old Testament; but when every defect in the Deuteronomic code has been pointed out, when we have marked every danger in its enforcement, we must still wonder whether monotheism could ever have been achieved in Judah apart from this centralization of worship in Jerusalem. And the most cynical observer of Josiah must have marked as the immediate, if transient, result of his reformation a cleansing of ethical life and a wider realization of uncompromising, exclusive Jehovah-worship.

Thirteenth Week, Sixth Day.

5. Nahum, "the Doomster"

Read Nahum Chapters 1 to 3 aloud, and imagine yourself a citizen of one of the "little peoples," victims of Assyria.

Assyria was "the great besieger of men." Her last strong monarch, Ashurbanipal, for all his devotion to architecture and literature, was a brute, who could tear the tongues from defeated foes and throw their bodies to the beasts; who could leave an entire land a smoking ruin, whence had been

taken away "the voice of men, the tread of cattle and sheep, and the sound of happy music. . . . He could conquer a petty king, and bind him in chains like a dog, and place him in a cage."[4]

The capital city of Assyria, Nineveh, was surrounded by walls said to be a hundred feet high and from fifty to a hundred feet wide at the base. Through its streets were continually passing captives, the statues of captured kings and gods. Upon its great walls might be seen the flayed skins of conquered foes. But like all bullies, the great bully of the world was growing flabby. There swept down upon Nineveh a vast horde of Manda and other wild and vigorous tribesmen, who broke into the city, burned the palaces and the temples of the gods, looted the treasures, and slaughtered at will.

But as the whole world stood trembling with the hope of redemption through Nineveh's destruction—a hope which seemed too good to be true—a contemporary of Zephaniah and Josiah, Nahum, uttered his prophecy of doom.

Vivid are the pictures of the last day of Nineveh. The onslaught of the besiegers, the rush of defenders to the wall, the opening of the watergates, the ruin of the palace: the prophet makes us see it all.

> But Nineveh hath been from of old like a pool of water: yet they flee away. Stand, stand, they cry; but none looketh back. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store, the glory of all goodly furniture. She is empty, and void, and waste; and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and anguish is in all loins, and the faces of them all are waxed pale. Where is the den of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions, where the lion and the lioness walked, the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his caves with prey, and his dens with ravin. Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will

[4] Rogers, "History of Babylonia and Assyria," vol. II, pp. 272, 276.

burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions; and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.

Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departeth not. The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels, and prancing horses, and bounding chariots, the horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear, and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses, and there is no end of the bodies; they stumble upon their bodies;—because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will uncover thy skirts upon thy face; and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?—Nahum 2:8-3:7.

We see the laborers scurry about, too late, to work up the clay into brick, to strengthen the forts; but Nineveh is like a pool of water. "Stand, stand, they cry; but none looketh back."

The merchants and great ones, who have settled like locusts upon the capital, now fly away in the hour of her peril. Then comes the swift plunder of the city. Yet, "Who will bemoan her? Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" "Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of hosts." With a last word of taunting triumph, the prophet cries: "There is no assuaging of thy hurt; Thy wound is grievous; all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee" (3:19). The city's ruin is the world's rejoicing.

"Of all the prophets," says a writer, "Nahum is the one who in dignity and force most nearly approaches Isaiah." Even the most casual reader must be fascinated by the closely knit sentences, the swiftly drawn, cartoon-like pic-

tures—"thy fortresses, fig-trees"; "thy warriors, women"; "thy princes, locusts"; Nineveh, "the den of lions, where the lion and the lioness walked, the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid" (2:11).

It is easy to discover defects in Nahum. He has no word of divine forgiveness. "Nahum's heart, for all its bigness, holds room only for the bitterness, the baffled hopes, the unappeased hatreds of a hundred years." He is the first prophet, whose words we have studied, who has no ringing denunciation of the sinners in Jerusalem; but it may be well answered that he had no cause in his brief oracle to dwell upon the sins of his own people. We do find in him a comradeship with all the oppressed of earth, the little, beaten, "battle-torn" peoples. The motto of the Cosmopolitan Club reaches beyond, but would not be foreign to his thought: "Above all nations, humanity." As one reads Nahum, one is reminded of "The Recessional," in which Kipling, as well as any modern, gives us Nahum's message to a proud, materialistic, Nineveh-like civilization.

"Far-called, our navies melt away—
  On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding, calls not Thee to guard—
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!"

The message is this: Sin is suicide. The people who build their civilization on lies and lechery and cruelty will be destroyed. God and his universe are against them. The message is not new, but it is a superb emphasis upon truths which Isaiah elaborated, when he said, "The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. . . . He also is wise" (Isa. 31:3, 2). The new thing in Nahum is really the absence of an old thing, the absence of the customary prophetic word against Israel's sin. The absence may mean the entrance into prophecy of a new and unfortunate temper.

Thirteenth Week, Seventh Day.

6. The Mourning of Megiddo, and Battles Which Changed the World

Not far from the date of Nahum's prophecy, while Assyria was still struggling for life, there occurred one of the most tragic events of Judah's history. A period of sunshine had followed the rigorous reformation of 621 B. C. Pharaoh Necho II was rising to power in Egypt. He began and perhaps completed a canal connecting Goshen with the Red Sea, another early "Suez Canal" (see p. 39). He also sent an expedition to circumnavigate Africa. This ambitious and enterprising monarch saw his opportunity to wrest from the old and toothless giant Assyria certain desirable Syrian possessions. Josiah with his little highland army went out to intercept him.

> Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In his days Pharaoh-necoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and Pharaoh-necoh slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the

> land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.—II Kings 23: 28-30.

According to the chronicler, Necho sought to dissuade Josiah from his untimely interference. But Josiah would not be dissuaded. What reason actuated him we do not know. Did he wish to retain the favor of his overlord, Assyria? Did he wish to avoid dangerous Egyptian influence to the north? Or was he actuated by a literalistic confidence in his precious book of Deuteronomy, which had guided him in his reformation? Certainly the book made to the faithful very definite and glorious promises of victory, victory entirely unconditioned by the numbers of the enemy. Josiah may have yielded to the temptation which Jesus in the later days resisted: to put to trial the Lord his God.

At Megiddo Josiah and the Pharaoh joined battle. Josiah was killed, his little army fled in confusion, and "the mourning of Megiddo" became a sorrowful tradition. From this time on "the suffering of the righteous became the problem of the wise."

Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, or Shallum, reigned for a hundred days, and was then taken away in chains by Necho, and carried off to Egypt. Jeremiah speaks pathetically of him:

> Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country. For thus saith Jehovah touching Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went forth out of this place: He shall not return thither any more; but in the place whither they have led him captive, there shall he die, and he shall see this land no more.—Jer. 22: 10-12.

Necho then placed upon the throne of Judah one of the most contemptible men who ever sat upon any throne, and gave to him a name which would have shamed the sin of any man, not already shameless—the name Jehoiakim (Jehovah raiseth up). He was the son of Josiah, but as the

old narrative would say, "walked not in his way." Apparently the new king decided that Jehovah had not played fair, had deserted his father. "Be good, and you will be happy"—was not that the supreme teaching of all the prophets? Sin means suffering, piety means prosperity. Now comes the death of his good father at Megiddo, with its staggering instruction, "Be good and you'll be killed." Jehoiakim concluded to desert Jehovah, or at any rate to discipline him by subordinating him as Manasseh had done in earlier days. The new king restored all the old heathen abominations in Jerusalem, taxed unmercifully the people of the land that he might pay the fine imposed by Necho his lord and master, and while his country was perishing gave himself to luxury. To idolatry and oppression he added murder, killed at least one prophet, Uriah, and threatened the death of a greater, Jeremiah. But meanwhile the world had come to "the end of an era."

After killing Josiah and defeating his army (608 B. C.), Necho laid much of the land west of the Euphrates under tribute. Nahum's doom upon Nineveh was fulfilled. The mighty empire of Assyria which had ruled *and* ruined for centuries passed with its capital city. Rogers tells us that "in 401 B. C. a cultivated Greek [Xenophon] leading homeward the fragment of his gallant army of ten thousand men passed by the mounds [of the city of Nineveh] and never knew that beneath them lay the palaces of the great Assyrian kings."

Up from the region about the Persian Gulf there had pushed into the ancient land of Babylonia a strong and virile Semitic race, the Chaldeans. They needed only the effective leadership of Nabopolassar to make them dominant in the old capital, Babylon itself. So long as Assyria held out Nabopolassar played well the game of politics, and acted as appointee of the Assyrian king. But when Nineveh perished the Chaldeans fell heir to the glory that was Assyria. Necho II thought that Nabopolassar might be an easy victim, and that Egypt might well extend still further

her conquests. Nebuchadrezzar, the son of the Chaldean king, met Necho at the decisive battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates, 605-4 B. C. Necho was defeated; and the writer of II Kings quaintly remarks: "And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land; for the king of Babylon had taken, from the brook of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt" (24:7).

The battle of Carchemish is one of the turning-points of history. The prophetic party in Judah saw clearly that the survival and security of the kingdom must be bought by absolute submission to the Chaldeans. Hope from Egypt there was none. Pharaoh Necho had no further disposition to war with Nebuchadrezzar. But for the death of his father, the prince of the Chaldeans would have swept as conqueror into Egypt (see Jer. 46). As Jehoiakim had paid tribute to Necho, he must now pay tribute to Nebuchadrezzar, the conqueror of his master.

We sing so often of the New Jerusalem, with her golden streets, her sea of glass, her harps, her crowns, her tree of life, her peace, that we fail to grasp the actualities of the old Jerusalem. News traveled very swiftly in the Orient. Stragglers from the battle of Megiddo came streaming into the city. The body of Josiah was borne through the streets. Then followed days of mourning. There came the speedy dethronement of the new king, the accession of Jehoiakim, appointee of Egypt; then came the grievous tribute, to be paid by the people; then followed the news of the fall of Nineveh, and Jerusalem joined in the universal hand-clapping. Swiftly followed the staggering news of the whipped army of Necho scurrying back to Egypt, Nebuchadrezzar at its heels. Hopes, fears, agonies, the tragic poverty of the masses and the callous, cruel luxury of the few—this was the experience of Jerusalem. Such were the facts which the religious man of Judah must face. We study in the book of Habakkuk the message of one of the few men who faced the facts.

Fourteenth Week, First Day.

7. Habakkuk, the Skeptic-Prophet

Read Hab., Chapters 1 and 2, to see how the problem of pain and injustice forced itself upon the prophet, and how God helped him *toward* the solution.

a. *The Prophet's Question.*

The normal speech of the prophet is this: "Thus saith Jehovah." But apparently in the early days of Jehoiakim, in that momentous last decade of the seventh century, there arose a prophet who spoke in a different voice and dared to ask the question, which the book of Job would later express in words of external beauty, the age-long question, "Why?" If Jehovah knows, if Jehovah cares, if Jehovah is strong, why does he permit the suffering of the righteous? Habakkuk puts the matter thus:

> O Jehovah, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save. Why dost thou show me iniquity, and look upon perverseness? for destruction and violence are before me; and there is strife, and contention riseth up. Therefore the law is slacked, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore justice goeth forth perverted.—Hab. 1: 2-4.

Out of the agony of his heart the prophet cries to his God, because he sees violence, iniquity, perverseness, destruction, strife, contention, the law paralyzed, justice perverted; and Jehovah seeing but saving not, hearing not. Hosea in his day, and Isaiah in his day, had seen and suffered like things; but they knew that Jehovah was already preparing his instrument of punishment. Habakkuk at first fails to see the operation of Jehovah's hand.

Who then were the oppressors, whose unhindered activities stirred the prophet's skepticism? Probably the sinners in Jerusalem who, in accordance with the good old-fashioned

plan, took because they had the power and kept because they could. After the death of Josiah, these men probably made "human life a hell" at least for the devotees of Jehovah.

b. *Jehovah's Answer.*

But the divine answer comes back to the prophet's agonized question:

> Behold ye among the nations, and look, and wonder marvellously; for I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen press proudly on: yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour. They come all of them for violence; the set of their faces is forwards; and they gather captives as the sand. Yea, he scoffeth at kings, and princes are a derision unto him; he derideth every stronghold; for he heapeth up dust, and taketh it.—Hab. 1:5-10.

"Then his purpose changeth and he passeth along, and he setteth up his altar" (1:11).[5]

The prophet gets his answer. As Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah had all seen the Assyrian as the instrument of Jehovah's judgment upon the sinners of Israel; as Zephaniah had heard the coming of the Scythian horsemen, the executioners of Jehovah; so our prophet seems to find in the Chaldeans the rod in the hand of Jehovah which shall punish the wicked in Jerusalem, who compass about the righteous. So far, then, we have no new contribution to prophetic thought.

c. *The Harder Problem.*

But in the later days, when the Chaldeans were showing

[5] Translation by Ward, Int. Com. Habakkuk, p. 9.

the brutality of their natures, the first answer which the prophet received must have raised another question in his own mind, or in the mind of one who shared his spirit and his problem. The question is this:

> Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he; and makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? He taketh up all of them with the angle, he catcheth them in his net, and gathereth them in his drag: therefore he rejoiceth and is glad. Therefore he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth incense unto his drag; because by them his portion is fat, and his food plenteous. Shall he therefore empty his net, and spare not to slay the nations continually?—Hab. 1: 13-17.

The Chaldeans themselves are cruel, treacherous, indiscriminate. They treat men—yes, good men—just as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them. They sacrifice to their own net, burn incense to their own drag. "Shall he therefore empty his net, and spare not to slay the nations continually?" These Chaldeans were to be Jehovah's instrument to destroy the wicked and deliver the righteous. But militarists, they worship their army and sacrifice good and bad alike. Mark how the man tries to hold his faith in God, yet is too honest to evade life's dreadful facts. So long as you worship Baal, impulsive, lawless, so long suffering offers no problem. Baal can do as he likes. So Caliban's deity provokes no moral problem:

> "He is strong and Lord.
> 'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
> That march now from the mountain to the sea;
> 'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
> Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
> 'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
> Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;

'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red:
As it likes me each time, I do: so He."

But as soon as your God reveals himself loving and wise and strong, so soon does the problem of pain become poignant, terrible. Surely

"nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me."

And yet, and yet, if he is strong, and good, and wise, why? Why?

Now what will the brave man do with his problem?

"I will stand upon my post,
And station myself on a tower,
And I will look forth to see what he will say to me,
And what answer he will return to my complaint."[6]

Fourteenth Week, Second Day.

d. *The Divine Solution.*

The prophet's problem faces all men of good will. One man slinks away with this solution, no solution: "God is unjust, the universe a lie." Another man acquiesces in the fool's dogmatism which declares, "There is no God." Our prophet is rather like the operator at a wireless telegraph station. Out on his desolate promontory, alone, he sends his message across the night and the sea. He looks forth, sees nothing; listens, hears nothing. But he is ready, alert, has his apparatus tuned and in order, sure that if he will but wait for it the answer will come.

"What do you know?" "Not much." "What do you know?" "Well, I know what Robertson in his darkest hour knew, 'that it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward.'" Good! Start there; stand

[6] Hab. 2: 1, translation by Ward.

upon the post of the truth you know, station yourself upon the tower of the duty you know. The eager, patient, expectant man shall get an answer to his complaint.

But what answer does the prophet get?

> And Jehovah answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay.
>
> Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him: but the righteous shall live by his faith.—Hab. 2:2-4.

Unfortunately the lines are not easily translated. It has been suggested that we should read them:

> "The upright shall rest his soul in me,
> And the righteous shall live by my faithfulness."

But with our present reading, the meaning is reasonably clear. The destiny of a man and of a nation is determined by character. The soul of the wicked "is not upright in him," it has the seeds of decay within itself, while the soul of the righteous has the seeds of life within itself. "The wild excesses of the tyrant carry within them the germ of certain ruin, the faithfulness of the righteous will be to him a principle of life."

In Rom. 1:17. and again in Gal. 3:11, Paul quotes this passage, as he found it in the Greek or Septuagint version (see p. 5): "The righteous shall live by faith." It has been said that faith, the characteristic virtue of the New Testament, is the root of the faithfulness which is the characteristic virtue of the Old. It was this quotation which, as Luther read it in Paul's writings, strengthened his heart to strike the fetters of Rome from his manhood. Clearly the words are not a complete answer to the prophet's question. It was God's own partial answer, and God has never yet given to human understanding a complete answer.

For a further discussion of the problem of pain, we must wait for our consideration of the book of Job. Meanwhile we do well to recall the word of a writer who has himself suffered much: "We very jauntily solve the problem of sorrow till our hearts are broken. Then we discover that to handle certain questions is to handle naked swords."

The remainder of our present book of Habakkuk is a compilation. The five Woes of Chapter 2 need not detain us. In Chapter 3 we have a psalm in which the writer prays that Jehovah will revive his work "in the midst of the years," the sad, dry, barren, meaningless years. There follows the description of a glorious theophany, or manifestation of Jehovah, surpassing that of the Exodus. With the last verses comes a message which may well serve as the fitting crown of the brave little book:

> For though the fig-tree shall not flourish,
> Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
> The labor of the olive shall fail,
> And the fields shall yield no food;
> The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
> And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
> Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
> I will joy in the God of my salvation.
> Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength;
> And he maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
> And will make me to walk upon my high places.
> —Hab. 3: 17-19.

The words breathe the majestic faith of a day probably much later than the seventh century, a faith which refused to believe that empty barns and barren trees were always God's punishment; which refused to see in all pain God's direct penalty for sin. Paul could go no further than these great words, but he knew more. Christ had shined upon him, and he could write: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38, 39).

We shall remember the book of Habakkuk as giving us a noble treatment of the crucial problem of all religion. We shall think of it as giving us two answers to the problem. The first answer is familiar to us: Outward punishment will befall oppressors, rescue will come to the righteous. The second answer is new only in emphasis. Amos had said, "Seek God, seek good, and live." Habakkuk says, "The righteous shall live by his faithfulness." One loves the man who believed in his God so much that he dared to ask Jehovah, as a child would dare to ask his father, "Why?"

"He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone."

Fourteenth Week. Third Day.

8. Jeremiah, Prophet of the Religion of the Inner Life

A recent news item states that "the moving picture has acquired a sudden and enormous popularity in Jerusalem, particularly among the native population. . . . It is impossible to accommodate the crowds that try to attend the theaters. People almost fought to get into a big theater when the film depicting the occupation of Beersheba was shown."[7]

It is strange to send one's thoughts across the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, over the railroad from Jaffa, through the ancient gates and into the ancient streets of Jerusalem, there to watch Turks and "Tommies," Armenians, Russians,

[7] *New York Times*, July 3, 1918.

Egyptians, Jews, squabbling and fraternizing in front of a moving-picture show. But that adventure of the mind makes it perhaps easier for one to think back into the last days of the seventh century in Jerusalem. Then the "sun-proof alleys" were filled with the poor; the narrow streets were crowded with merchants from Phœnicia, with soldiers —first from Assyria, then from Egypt, then from Babylon. Pilgrims, "their faces aflame with fierce ecstasy," made their way to the ancient temple of Solomon, now cleansed and beautified by Josiah, glorified by the laws of Deuteronomy, only to be desecrated again by heathen accessories.

We have studied the words of one brave and gentle man who faced the facts of the time. We trust that Habakkuk was the friend of the man whom we now study, another who faced the facts. This man, Jeremiah, has been called by one writer "the greatest of the prophets," by another writer, "the first great heretic."

Let us look at the man himself.

Read Jer. 1, 2, and 12, or, rather, the first twelve chapters. How much would you give to be permitted to sit for forty-five minutes with the greatest prophet of the Old Testament? It won't cost you anything. The prophet in these chapters reveals his very heart.

a. *The Prophet at Prayer.*

In the year of the Scythian invasion, which stirred to flame the prophetic spirit of Zephaniah, Jeremiah, in his communion with Jehovah, saw his vision and heard his call. He regarded himself as "a very young man"; but he knew in that hour that for the truth he needs must think he would have to choose "hatred, scoffing, and abuse." As he reflected in the after-time upon that vision, he realized what it meant:

(1) That his prophethood had been Jehovah's long plan.

(2) That the sphere of his prophethood was not alone Jerusalem, but "the nations."

(3) That as a herald identifies his task with that of his king, he was "to destroy and restore nations."

The prayers of Jeremiah are singularly rich in self-revelation. They are dialogues with his God. He argues with Jehovah, curses the day of his birth, laments that he is a man held in contempt by his friends. But he surrenders to God.

> O Jehovah, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out; I cry, Violence and destruction! because the word of Jehovah is made a reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain.—Jer. 20:7-9.

In a wonderful passage (12:1-5), we hear the prophet pleading in words which remind us of Habakkuk: "Righteous art thou, O Jehovah, when I contend with thee; yet would I reason the cause with thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously? . . . thou art near in their mouth, and far from their heart" (12:1, 2).

Jeremiah prays that Jehovah will pull these men out as sheep for the slaughter. But he hears Jehovah's answer:

> "If thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how wilt thou vie with horses? and if in a land of peace thou takest to flight, how wilt thou do in the pride of Jordan? (The rank luxuriant growth of bushes and thick vegetation fringing the banks of the Jordan, infested by lions, and dangerous to enter.)"[8]

When we would strengthen people for a dreaded task, we are wont to tell them that, though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning. We delight to tell them that in the blessed "Afterward" the light affliction worketh

[8] Jer. 12:5, as translated by Driver.

more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. And this is all well; but no such comfort does the prophet get. His God speaks to him—and we wonder whether he does not speak in like manner to his bravest men—"You are wearied when you race with footmen; what will you do when you compete with horses? Are you taking to flight in a land of peace? One day you will have to enter the perils of 'the pride of Jordan.'" He hears Jehovah speak to him neither of flowery beds of ease, nor yet of skies and crowns; but of sterner, harder, more agonizing work for his Lord.

A sensitive, affectionate man, he is to have no wife, no children (16:2). A man who probably has been prosperous, with money or property enough to live a life of cultured ease, he is to be hounded by imprisonment and near-starvation. A man of purest patriotism, he must be the hiss and by-word of king, priest, prophet, populace, whose shibboleths he may not utter, and whose hopes he may not cherish. But this sufficing comfort the man gets:

"If thou return [from despair and distrust], then will I bring thee again, that thou mayest stand before me; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile ['what is pure and divine within thee from the slag of earthly passion and weakness'], thou shalt be as my mouth. . . . And I will make thee unto this people a fortified brazen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith Jehovah" (15:19-21).

In this man's prayer life we find revealed a religion utterly separate from sacrifice, priest, or sanctuary. It is the religion of "a personal relation between God and the individual soul." Amos, Hosea, Isaiah would have recognized this as real religion. But no one of these men has left us a record of inner communion with God so vivid and beautiful. "By his life of personal communion with God, Jeremiah becomes the spiritual father of those psalmists, whose names are indeed unknown to us, but to whom we owe all the

deep outpourings of the heart to God which we find in the Psalms."[9]

Fourteenth Week, Fourth Day.

b. *The Prophet's Verdict.*

Read Jer. 7 and 8, chapters in which are found some of the prophet's characteristic and original messages.

It is not difficult to imagine the impression made upon a man of Jeremiah's temperament and personal religious experience by the popular religion and morals of Judah.

In the days before Josiah's reformation, when Zephaniah was heaping his anathemas upon the young fops with their foreign ways, Jeremiah saw persistent baal-worship, and baldly called it harlotry (2:23). He found men saying "to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth." Ah, "But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah" (2:27, 28). And in words far more loving, more tender, more passionate than Zephaniah knew, Jeremiah pronounced upon his people the divine verdict: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (2:13). The significance of the figure can be appreciated alone by those who have known the meaning of an oasis, found at last after the long marches and the mirages of the desert. Think of turning from a fountain to a broken cistern!

Deserters in religion, the people were to the prophet's thought defaulters in morals. "Among my people are found wicked men: they watch, as fowlers lie in wait; they set a trap, they catch men" (5:26). Indeed, he declared the situation worse than that of Sodom in the olden days:

[9] Driver, "The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah," p. xxxviii.

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her" (5:1).

But for sin there must be punishment. Like his contemporary and probable comrade, Zephaniah, he saw at first in the Scythians the scourge of God. Later, the Chaldeans loomed up as Judah's destroyer.

Jeremiah greatly admired Josiah. It is far from certain that he sympathized with all the aspects of the reformation. He seems never to have commended Josiah for his adoption of the Deuteronomic Code; but in the later days, when he was upbraiding Jehoiakim for his extravagance, so untimely and cruel, he said of Josiah: "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this to know me? saith Jehovah" (22:15, 16).

With the reign of Jehoiakim all the old vices and superstitions came back. As in England with the reign of Charles the Second the lower forces of the land, held in leash by Cromwell, broke loose, so in Judah the ancient heathenish ways became once more the popular ways. Men began again to love and serve the sun and moon and all the host of heaven (8:2). There was enough of that "family religion" of which we delight to speak, but it meant the cooperation of the entire family in idolatry.

> Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods.—Jer. 7:17, 18.

And the ethical inference from these "religious" activities was drawn by all: "They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return . . . no man repenteth him of his wickedness" (8:5, 6).

c. *The Issue between Prophet and People.*

The irreconcilable conflict between Jeremiah and his fellow-citizens arose from this fact: While they were sinning against God and man, they thought that no evil could befall them. The enthronement of the Deuteronomic Code gave to the temple, to the priesthood, to the sacrifices, and to the city of Jerusalem, a prestige which fostered disastrous religious self-complacency. "We are the people. If we perish, Jehovah worship will perish out of the earth, and Jehovah himself, if he does not die, will pass. We have now fulfilled the commandments of our God, observed every ceremony which he requires. It is now his small but imperative task to protect us." Jeremiah could not evade the issue. "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?" (7:9, 10).

"Do you imagine that God is characterless as you are? How can you suppose that the shadow of the temple shelters you beneath the shadow of the wings of the Almighty?" Jeremiah bade his hearers go to Shiloh, where was Jehovah's sanctuary at the first, where Samuel the honored prophet ministered in the old days. The sanctuary itself was gone, even as the whole Northern Kingdom had disappeared.

> But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith Jehovah, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not: therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.—Jer. 7:12-15.

"Ah, but we have carefully attended to all the ritual prescribed

by Jehovah's law!" Swift as light, sharp as lightning, comes back the word: "To what purpose cometh there to me frankincense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me" (6:20).

The "great heretic" pressed the argument: You talk all the time about your obedience to the law of Moses in this eternal multiplication of sacrifices. "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of Jehovah is with us? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely" (8:8). I say to you that sacrifice never was *the* religion of Jehovah.

> I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.—Jer. 7:22, 23.

Amos, could he have heard Jeremiah, would have applauded the great words (compare Amos 5:25); Hosea and Isaiah would have said "Amen"; but the priests and professional prophets and the populace could but think to themselves: "We have a law and by that law he ought to die. Let us just take a leaf out of this newly discovered Deuteronomic Code of ours. It says, 'The prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak . . . that same prophet shall die'" (Deut. 18:20).

But while they were piously plotting the prophet's death, pointing with their fingers to the damning passage from Deuteronomy, Jeremiah was pleading with them: "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Truly there is balm in Gilead, truly the healers of Gilead are famous. Truly there is healing for every physical hurt of men. *Is not Jehovah in Zion?* The balm, the healer, are here, if you will but have them. The priest and the prophet "have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly,

saying Peace, peace; when there is no peace." *Is not Jehovah in Zion?* He alone can cleanse, can heal (See 8:22, 11, 19).

Along with this word, we may place another, which Moulton declares to be among the most sublime of the many sublime sayings in Jeremiah:

> Thus saith Jehovah, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this: that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah.—Jer. 9: 23, 24.

The words breathe the very spirit of him who in after years would say: "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17:3).

Fourteenth Week, Fifth Day.

In words which we recognize as purest poetry, Jeremiah besought his people:

> Give glory to Jehovah your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Jehovah's flock is taken captive.—Jer. 13:16, 17.

John Bright once said: "I appeal to the conscience of England, and I know in my heart that I shall be heard." Jeremiah appealed to the conscience of Jerusalem, and met no response. Hear him plead:

"Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your soul," and they quietly remarked: "We will not walk therein." These men couldn't even blush (6:16, 15).

"It takes a soul
To move a body—it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses even to a cleaner stye.
It takes the ideal to blow an inch inside
The dust of the actual."

Yes, but did the body move? Was the stye cleaner? Did the dust of the actual stir? Jeremiah would be heard one day.

d. *Patriot or Traitor?*

Jeremiah was not only one of the greatest moral and religious teachers of all time: he was a statesman. He saw that Judah had but one chance of life, that gained by quiet submission to the Chaldeans. But his political teaching was as distasteful to his hearers as his ethical and religious preachments. He was met by callous skepticism: "Where is the word of Jehovah? let it come now" (17:15).

Again, he learned that the citizens of his own little town, the playmates of his childhood, had framed a conspiracy against him (11:18-23). Again he faced taunts and treachery:

"Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.[10] Come and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" (18:18).

He was imprisoned in the stocks: "Now Pash-hur, the son of Immer the priest, who was chief officer in the house of Jehovah, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. Then Pash-hur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the upper gate of Benjamin, which was in the house of Jehovah" (20:1, 2). Again a contemptible and contemptuous king cut with his pen-knife the manuscript of the prophet's message, patiently written by his secretary Baruch, and proceeded to burn it "in the fire that was in the brazier."

[10] Note, incidentally, the division of the nation's teachers into the three classes, priests, prophets, and the wise—a division we shall meet again (see p. 372).

And they went in to the king into the court; but they had laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; and they told all the words in the ears of the king. So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll; and he took it out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood beside the king. Now the king was sitting in the winter-house in the ninth month: and there was a fire in the brazier burning before him. And it came to pass, when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, that the king cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was in the brazier, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier. And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. Moreover Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll; but he would not hear them. And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; but Jehovah hid them.

Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.—Jer. 36: 20-28.

We have read of a mother who cried bitterly as she thought of her idiot child, and said, "For fourteen years I have cared for that child day and night. I have given up society, and spent the time with her, and today she does not know me from you. If she would recognize me once, it would pay me for all I have ever done for her." Jeremiah's passionate, almost maternal love for his people met what must have seemed to him an almost idiotic lack of response and recognition, or rather an insane hostility.

One is reminded of Ibsen's "Enemy of the People." There is an interesting parallel, too, between Jeremiah and Tolstoi. Many a smaller man was exiled, tortured, killed by the Russian autocracy; Tolstoi was left to live and speak his message.

Uriah probably never dared to breathe half the thoughts which Jeremiah hurled at the priests and self-styled patriots of Jerusalem. Uriah was killed (26:20-24), while Jeremiah lived on.

e. *"Whom the Gods Would Destroy."*

In the great crises of American history, there have been great men to lead us. But we should be fools indeed if we should deify brainlessness, and trust to precedent or a falsely conceived providence to furnish us at every crisis a Washington or a Lincoln. In the Holy City, in crises which shrieked for great rulers, folly was the actual sovereign. Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadrezzar. The Chaldeans at once besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiakim, who had brought on the evil, died in the midst of the siege, leaving a heavy task to his successor, Jehoiachin or Coniah. The city was captured 597 B. C. In the First Exile, so called, most of the ablest, noblest citizens of Jerusalem, among them Ezekiel, were carried away into Babylon. With them went the king, who had served as a pathetic figurehead for three months. The writer of II Kings derives some poor comfort from the fact that the royal captive was well treated in his latter days (II Kings 25:27-30, cf. Jer. 52:31-34).

In 586 B. C. occurred the next great act in the tragedy of Jerusalem, surely the very Mother of Sorrows. Nebuchadrezzar had placed upon the throne a weakling son of Josiah, to whom he gave the royal name Zedekiah. Buoyed by false hopes, which were inspired by false prophets, encouraged by large promises from Egypt, the king followed the fatal course of his predecessors, and rebelled against his sovereign. Jeremiah did his best to prevent the murder of the state; but to no purpose. And when Zedekiah, still believing in the man he would not obey, sent messengers to him, saying, "peradventure Jehovah will deal with us according to all his wondrous works," Jeremiah made reply:

> Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah: Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in

your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans that besiege you, without the walls; and I will gather them into the midst of this city. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation. . . . And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and passeth over to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face upon this city for evil, and not for good, saith Jehovah: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.—Jer. 21: 3-5, 8-10.

In the course of the siege, lasting a year and a half, the forces of the Chaldeans were for a time drawn away to meet the Egyptians, under Pharaoh Hophra. Great was the rejoicing within the city. "We knew that Jeremiah was a false prophet and a traitor!" The slaves whom the citizens had set free were brought again into bondage. Jeremiah, whom they chanced to see going out to his home in Anathoth, they stopped, declaring that he was falling to the Chaldeans. Jeremiah denied the charge, but without avail. He was put into prison, and then was cast into a dungeon, into whose mire he sank down, presumably to die (38: 5, 6). Saved by an Ethiopian eunuch, he remained under guard until the city was taken.

Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin), Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die in the place where he is, because of the famine; for there is no more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dun-

> geon, before he die. So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence rags and worn-out garments, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these rags and worn-out garments under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with the cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.—Jer. 38:7-13.

The Chaldean soldiery gave themselves to loot. All the vessels of the temple were taken to be devoted to Marduk of Babylon. The temple itself, with all its tragic, epic memories, was soon a heap of ruins. Zedekiah fled. "But the army of Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon" (II Kings 25:5-7).

Jeremiah, whom the conquerors knew as their advocate, had the option of going with the exiles—a happier fate—or of staying with the pitiable group of people whom the Chaldeans did not think worth removing.

Fourteenth Week, Sixth Day.

f. *The Prophet and the Remnant.*

Read II Kings 25:22-26, for the historian's picture of the last scenes in the national life of Judah.

Happiness never decided Jeremiah's course. He remained with the Remnant.

Ishmael, of the royal line, to vent a private grudge, killed the unsuspecting and patriotic governor of the remnant, Gedaliah, appointee of Babylon (II Kings 25:23-25). The little flock of poor and beaten Hebrews now felt sure that Nebuchadrezzar would charge them all with the murder, and

would sweep them from the earth. Against the urgent advice of Jeremiah, "the nobles and military commanders of the little Jewish state, with the men, women, and children, with Jeremiah and his scribe as compulsory attendants, migrated in a body to Egypt."

> And it came to pass that, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of Jehovah their God, wherewith Jehovah their God had sent him to them, even all these words, then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: Jehovah our God hath not sent thee to say, Ye shall not go into Egypt to sojourn there; but Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death, and carry us away captive to Babylon. So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of Jehovah, to dwell in the land of Judah. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all the nations whither they had been driven, to sojourn in the land of Judah; the men, and the women, and the children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan; and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah. And they came into the land of Egypt; for they obeyed not the voice of Jehovah: and they came unto Tahpanhes.—Jer. 43: 1-7.

The last recorded scene in Jeremiah's life is laid in Egypt. The old prophet had become practically the unloved pastor of some hundreds of exiles. One remembers the word of Arnold:

> "They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?
> Better men fared thus before thee;
> Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
> Hotly charged—and sank at last.
>
> Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
> Let the victors, when they come,
> When the forts of folly fall,
> Find thy body by the wall!"

To the last the prophet charged the forts of folly. The contest of Jeremiah with the women would be a delightful story, but for the tragedy behind it. He pleaded with them to give up their idolatry, but they answered back:

> Then all the men who knew that their wives burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great assembly, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of Jehovah, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly perform every word that is gone forth out of our mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink-offerings unto her, without our husbands?—Jer. 44: 15-19.

And the old man could only retort that their woes had fallen upon them because of their neglect, not of the gods, but of him who is God alone. Neither prophet nor people had yet learned the lesson of Job.

A not improbable tradition tells us that Jeremiah was stoned to death by his people.

g. *An Estimate.*

Probably no book of the Old Testament has undergone so many changes as the book of Jeremiah. For example, the Greek version contains 2,700 fewer words than the Hebrew version. Some of the greatest passages of the book we shall study later. If not certainly by the prophet himself, they are the words of men who knew the heart of the prophet

and the heart of his God. But the words that we have studied bring him easily into the forefront of "the glorious company of the prophets." There had been a day when Jeremiah's little secretary was worried about his future. The amanuensis of a great prophet in great danger has no sinecure. But on that day Jeremiah had said to Baruch, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (45:5). It is quite certain that if Baruch had started out in search of great things, he would have been forgotten more than twenty-four hundred years ago. Today his name is known wherever is known the name of Jeremiah.

To our prophet the gods of the heathen were no-gods. Jehovah alone was God. And his religion was completely differentiated from temple, priesthood, book, ritual. It was "the life of God in the soul of man." "Jeremiah is himself the most conspicuous example in the Old Testament of religion individualized in a person." He belonged to God, communed with him, knew that God was with him in the misery of the dungeon, and in the midst of the contradiction of sinners. And this religion of his, because it was so personal and real, must issue in social relations of integrity, justice, and lovingkindness.

Some men are smaller than their messages. Nicholas of Russia, a very small man, suggested the First Hague Conference. Other men are bigger than anything they ever did or said. Such a man was Jeremiah. To him often "the voice of events" must have spoken brutally, "Thou hast wasted thy life." While he was living, his words seemed utterly futile. As a preacher once described his own work, he seemed to be shooting his rifle at a mud parapet. The one patriot of the city, for a score of years he was thought to be a traitor by the people he loved. To be misunderstood by your friends for a day is hard. To be misunderstood for years is heart-breaking. But, like General Booth, he "hungered for Hell." Never for an instant did he waver in his career of sacrificial devotion. To no man have the words been more fittingly applied:

". . . iron dug from central gloom
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears
And batter'd with the shocks of doom
To shape and use."

Jeremiah's work did not die. It may well be that he "sat for the portrait" of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. In the days of Jesus, people whispered one to another, "This must be Jeremiah." The prophet knew little of the Master's forgiveness (11:20-23); but no man of the Old Testament approached more nearly to our Master in the spirit of his life and of his death; and "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Fourteenth Week, Seventh Day.

Summary

To the thoughtful man the period we have been studying is profoundly saddening. Isaiah wrought his great work, to have it apparently undone by Manasseh. Josiah and his prophetic comrades wrought their reformation, to have its fruits apparently blighted by Jehoiakim and his successors. But the very fanaticism of Manasseh's reaction tended to cure it; and after the centralization of worship in Jerusalem, the heathenism of Judah at its worst was probably not as prevalent or dominant as in the earlier years.

Meanwhile certain ideas, indestructible ideas, had entered the minds of men. In the Exile the lessons previously ignored were remembered. Men recalled the words of Zephaniah the aristocrat, who fought for God's democracy. They remembered the lesson of Nahum, that any civilization which builds itself upon lies and lechery and cruelty must perish. They remembered the revelation to Habakkuk, that the righteous shall live by his faithfulness. They remembered well the words of Jeremiah, his passionate protest against no-gods, his surpassing fearlessness in severing

religion from the sacrificial system and the temple ceremonies.

But in the aftertimes men remembered best the men: Zephaniah, who dared attack things as they are in the interest of things as they ought to be; Nahum, with his hunger for world justice; Habakkuk, who had the courage to question his God, and the greater courage to wait in faith till God's answer came; and, above all, Jeremiah, the supposed traitor, the proved patriot, the weak man, who through God's grace became "a fortified city and an iron pillar and brazen walls" against land and kings and princes and priests and people. They remembered these men and gloried in them, and many a man came to warm himself at the fires of their faith and their fearlessness.

And the message of the century we have studied comes to us in our despondency:

"Say not, the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright."

—Arthur Hugh Clough.

A Footnote: Kings and Chronicles

Our scriptural authorities for the period extending from the division of the kingdom to the destruction of Jerusalem

are the prophecies and the books of Kings. The material of I and II Kings is largely derived from documents practically contemporary with the events recorded. All the material has been worked over by a compiler interested in the achievements of Josiah's reformation, which centralized Jehovah worship in Jerusalem. The books, though often subjected in later times to slight changes by copyists and editors, seem to have taken essentially final shape by 400 B. C.

The books of Chronicles narrate the story of the chosen people, from the standpoint of the Jerusalem priesthood, at approximately the close of the fourth century. The Chronicler's interest is homiletical rather than historical. That is: the nation's story must preach a sermon. He wishes to prove that national prosperity is assured by national piety, that every declension from the strict worship of Jehovah must be followed by political decline. He is deeply interested in the genealogies which help to keep the Jewish blood untainted. He delights in stories of the organization and observance of the temple feasts and fasts and other ritual. He exalts the various groups of temple officials. Martin Luther rightly recognized the superior historical value of the books of Kings, and said, "The Books of Kings go ten thousand steps for one of the writers of Chronicles." An interesting illustration of the Chronicler's attitude and purpose is given us in I Chron. 21 as contrasted with II Sam. 24.

According to a widespread Oriental belief, the taking of a military census was displeasing to God. It was thought an evidence of the pride and arrogancy of men. In the book of Exodus 30: 11-16, while provision is made for the census of Israel, an appropriate sacrifice is also provided: "Then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Jehovah, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them" (Exodus 30: 11).

In the early narrative of II Samuel, Jehovah himself is represented as tempting David to number the people. In I Chronicles the record would relieve Jehovah of the moral responsibility of the plague. Satan, or the Adversary, be-

comes the tempter. The Chronicler also differs from the older writer in his description of the angel of punishment, as well as of the amount given by the king in his purchase of the threshing floor.

While not of great value in our study of the period which he describes, the Chronicler gives to us an impressive and important revelation of the conceptions and convictions of religious men in the days when the nation had become a church.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. With what religious and moral convictions would a sympathetic friend of Isaiah have entered the seventh century?

2. Would you think it inevitable that a city should suffer from religious reaction after a great and salutary reformation like that of Isaiah?

3. Characterize the Day of Jehovah, as understood by Amos, by Zephaniah, and by the common populace in the period of each prophet.

4. Victor Hugo writes of Waterloo: "Was it possible that Napoleon should have won that battle? No. Why? Because of Wellington? No. Because of Blücher? No. Because of God. Napoleon had been denounced in the Infinite, and his fall had been decided on. He embarrassed God. Waterloo is not a battle, it is a change of front on the part of the universe." Compare the view of Victor Hugo with that of Nahum in his prophecy against Assyria.

5. Have you at present any light to throw upon Habakkuk's problem?

6. Compare and contrast the prayer life of Jeremiah with that of an average citizen of Jerusalem.

7. Did not the people of Jerusalem have a perfect right to believe that the presence of the temple, with its punctilious worship, would save them? Why?

8. If Jeremiah had been in Belgium at the beginning of

the Great War, what do you suppose would have been his advice to King Albert?

9. Why did the people wish Jeremiah to go down to Egypt with them? Why did they not take the first opportunity to get rid of him?

CHAPTER X

Exilic Hopes and Emphases

"Judaism in the Making"

Introductory

Fifteenth Week, First Day.

The years 586-538 B. C. were crucial for the entire Semitic world. They witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish state. They witnessed as well the ruin of her oppressor, the empire of Babylon, and the incredibly swift conquests of Cyrus and his Persians (Indo-Europeans).

The Judeans, who had been carried away in the First Exile, were called by Jeremiah "the good figs." Even those who were exiled in 586 B. C. were among the more substantial families of Jerusalem. Some of these exiles, instead of being crushed by their hideous experience, began to examine causes, to diagnose their spiritual diseases; and then, under their inspired leaders, they sought to find and to use God's remedy.

The study of this chapter will give us an opportunity to consider the book of Lamentations, the prophecies of Ezekiel, of Obadiah, and of the so-called Prophet of the Exile. We shall see the people breaking the chains of their old provincial conceptions of God, and entering into liberating experiences with God. At the same time we shall see men in their zeal for holiness welding chains which would one day bind the free spirit of religion.

In this study, instead of attempting to cover each book separately, we shall group the message of the exile, as found in Lamentations, Ezekiel, Obadiah, and the Prophet of the Exile, under the following headings:

1. The Exiles' Sorrow for Sin; 2. The Exiles' Hope; 3. The Grounds of Hope; 4. The Exilic Emphasis upon the Individual; 5. The Exilic Emphasis upon the Inwardness of Religion; 6. The Exilic Emphasis upon the "Righteousness of the Law"; 7. The Exiles' Ideal of Manhood; 8. The Holy People and the Gentile World; 9. The Holy People and Their King.

1. The Exiles' Sorrow for Sin

Photographs from the battlefields of Belgium and of France have given us a vivid picture of the experiences endured by refugees from towns and villages devastated by the Great War. These refugees have been cheered on their desolate marches by the certainty of friendly hands and faces just ahead. The exiles from Jerusalem must have resembled more nearly those pitiable thousands of Armenians who were driven from their homes into the thirsty, hungry desert, in 1914-16.

One can bear a heavy load upon the back if the heart is light. But the heart's load was for the Judean exiles heavier than any external burden.

Read Lam. 4 for a picture of the heart of Jerusalem in exile.

The book of Lamentations, with its artificial poetical construction, could hardly have been written in the first days of the Exile; but it gives us a graphic and apparently early picture of the tragedy which must have well-nigh crushed the bravest hearts.

> Jehovah hath done that which he purposed; he hath fulfilled his word that he commanded in the days of old;
> He hath thrown down, and hath not pitied:
> And he hath caused the enemy to rejoice over thee; he hath exalted the horn of thine adversaries.
> Their heart cried unto the Lord:
> O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night;

Give thyself no respite; let not the apple of thine eye cease.
Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches;
Pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord:
Lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger at the head of every street.
See, O Jehovah, and behold to whom thou hast done thus!
Shall the women eat their fruit, the children that are dandled in the hands?
Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?
The youth and the old man lie on the ground in the streets;
My virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword:
Thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast slaughtered, and not pitied.

—Lam. 2: 17-21.

The exiles could not forget what they had seen: the delicate women who had fed upon their own children; their king, "the anointed of Jehovah," taken in the pits; the priest and prophet slain in the sanctuary; the very stones of the temple poured out at the head of every street; the hateful neighbor nations, spectators, clapping their hands, jeering: "Is this the city that men called The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" (Lam. 2 and 4).

But these hounded men and women, dragging their little children along to exile, carried in their hearts something more than a hideous memory. They carried the burden of communal guilt. "Thy prophets have seen for thee false and foolish visions" (Lam. 2: 14).

"It is because of the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her" (Lam. 4: 13). Nor could the people find any mitigation of guilt in the thought that the sins were those of priests and prophets only. The iniquity was that of the city, "the daughter of my people." The conviction weighed

upon every exile, that the destruction of Jerusalem was the work of Jehovah. Jehovah's anger, his arm, wrought this ruin of sanctuary and city. Like the sin of Sodom, like the sin of Samaria, was their sin.

Fifteenth Week, Second Day.

2. The Exiles' Hope

Not upon all did the guilt rest so heavily as did the misery of the time. We know that many of the exiles rose to places of prominence in the financial, and probably the political, life of the Babylonian empire. Swiftly struggling out of the misery, accommodating himself to the new environment, many a Hebrew became of the earth earthy. Many, too, hung their harps on the willows, wept as they remembered Zion, and could sing neither a song of penitence nor of hope. But others began to speak of a Return to Zion, a Restored Temple.

This hope was no new thing. The victims of the First Exile, 597 B. C., were constantly befooled by false prophets who told them that they would soon return to Jerusalem. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel had warned their people against ill-founded hopes. But it is certain that even before the final destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah had cherished the assurance of a new life for his land and his people.

In the very last days of the siege of the city the prophet had learned that his duty to his family required him to purchase a certain field at Anathoth, his old homestead. With proper witnesses, and elaborate legalities, Jeremiah purchased the property. One reminds us of the story of Livy, that when Hannibal was camping within three miles of Rome, the very ground on which he camped brought a good price at auction in the Roman forum. The significance of his act was thus revealed to the prophet:

> Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, this deed of the purchase which is sealed, and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel; that they may continue many days. For thus

saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land.—Jer. 32: 14, 15.

"Many a people had been swallowed up in the advance of Assyrian and Babylonian power and forever lost. . . . This was not to be true in the case of Judah. The Hebrew had ideas that could not be quenched, and these carried his person into a life that would not die among men."

The hope which Jeremiah cherished, Ezekiel cultivated in the seemingly barren soil of Babylon. This hope we may appreciate somewhat better if we know Ezekiel a little better.

Ezekiel, as we have seen, was one of those carried to Babylon in the First Exile. After studying Jeremiah, one finds the symbolism of Ezekiel's visions elaborate, ornate. But there is one incident of the man's life, which brings him very close to us, and opens to us his heart.

Also the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet thou shalt neither mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead; bind thy headtire upon thee, and put thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.—Ezek. 24: 15-18.

The words are ineffably sad. The man loved his wife. She had been the desire of his eyes. But no personal grief must interfere with his prophetic service. Nay, his sorrow must serve. "At even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded." The incident is the superlative illustration of the relationship which Ezekiel believed he sustained to his God. "The hand of Jehovah was there upon me"; "The spirit lifted me up." For a period Jehovah silenced him, then again opened his lips. He thought of himself as a watchman, set upon the city's walls. "When the sword cometh, it

is mine to blow the trumpet. If the people hear, well and good; if they laugh, their blood is on their own heads."

Ezekiel was the pastor of the exiles, respected, admired, if not at first obeyed. In the earlier days of his pastorate, he preached incessantly against the false prophets who insisted that soon Jehovah must bring His own dear children back to their own dear city. In vision after vision he showed them that Jerusalem must be destroyed. In his sword song, he sang of Jehovah's "terrible swift sword" wielded against the whole city. In one of his superb visions, he saw Jehovah in majesty leaving the precincts of his temple defiled by sin (Ezek. 10:18).

But when at last the ghastly news reached the earlier exiles that Jerusalem had actually been destroyed, the reputation of the prophet was established, and from this time on, Ezekiel began to breathe into the hearts of his comrades a deathless hope, and to prepare for the reconstruction of the city according to the divine ideal.

Most impressive is the picture which he paints of the valley of dead bones, exceeding dry, quickened by the breath of Jehovah. "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel."

> The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. And he caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy over these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.
>
> So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and, behold, an earthquake; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

And I beheld, and, lo, there were sinews upon them, and flesh came up, and skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. —Ezek. 37: 1-10.

A writer has said: "Isaiah is the Milton, Ezekiel is the Dante of the Old Testament." With the vivid, dramatic detail of Dante does Ezekiel portray his earthly paradise, the restored city of Jerusalem.

Fifteenth Week, Third Day.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up on a high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God! Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

> He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young.—Isa. 40: 1-11.

It is supposed that Ezekiel died c. 572 B. C., but the hope he cherished was not buried in his sepulcher. The exiles listened also to the messages of one perhaps greater if not more influential than Ezekiel, the unknown "Prophet of the Exile."[1] To people who felt themselves victims of their own and their fathers' sins, the prophet told the glad news that the warfare of Jerusalem had been accomplished, that her iniquity had been pardoned. To hearts homesick for Jerusalem he spoke of the king's highway through the wilderness, which they were to prepare. To those who had seen every vision fail, who saw their fathers and friends and little children wither as the grass, fade as the flower, he said, "Yes, that is all true; but the word of our God shall stand forever."

With the fearlessness of faith, the man sang of the great Shepherd who should lead his flock, and gather the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead those who have their young.

3. The Grounds of Hope

But why should prophets in Babylon even dare to dream of a return to Zion? Did their hope differ from that of the false prophets? The foundations of their hope were partly political, but mainly religious.

a. *The Political Grounds of Hope.*

In 562-561 B. C. Nebuchadrezzar, warrior and builder of temples, palaces, defenses, and empires, died, leaving his throne to a son, who profoundly stirred the hearts of the Hebrew exiles by lifting up "the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, out of prison . . . and he changed his prison garments. And Jehoiachin did eat bread before him con-

[1] It is assumed that Chapters 40 to 54 of Isaiah are exilic. Kent and other writers would throw most of this material into the period following the Exile.

tinually all the days of his life" (II Kings 25:27-30). Might not this liberation of a Jewish king be the beginning of the end of sorrows?

But "in the second full year of his reign" the new king of Babylon was assassinated. Death and intrigue had their way for a while until 556 B. C., when Nabonidus came to the throne. The new sovereign devoted his time to the rebuilding of ancient temples, and seems to have surrendered the actual control of the state to his son, Bel-shar-usur, the biblical Belshazzar. Meanwhile there had arisen to the northeast of Babylonia a remarkable man, Cyrus, king of Anshan. With miraculous energy he made himself king of Manda, and called himself king of the Parsu (from which comes our word "Persians"). Crœsus of Lydia summoned against this new military genius Egyptians, Babylonians, and even Spartans from the distant west; but soon Cyrus was the master of Crœsus himself. He then proceeded against "Babylon, the strongest fortress in the world." Nabonidus hurried the gods of all the land for safety to the royal city, but seems to have made no attempt to defend his empire. Cyrus's army entered the open gates of the capital without battle and Cyrus himself was given the plaudits of the peoples.

"Never from that hour until the age of Islam was a Semitic power to command a world-wide empire. The glory of Babylon is ended. . . . No city so vast had stood on the world before. No city with a history so long has even yet appeared. . . . It would soon be a shapeless mass of ruins, standing alone in a sad, untilled desert."[2]

The practice of Cyrus was to make his subjects his friends. He also did his best to make the subject gods his friends. He writes: "Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced in my pious deeds, and graciously blessed me." He goes on to say that he returned to their homes the deities captured by the Babylonian kings. "The gods, who dwelt in them [various conquered

[2] Condensed from "History of Babylonia and Assyria," by Rogers, Vol. II, p. 366ff.

cities], I collected and restored them to their dwelling places."[3]

Surely, then, the exiles, whose treasure and whose hearts were in Jerusalem, whose God loved the gates of Zion, had a right to see in the amazing progress of Cyrus, the new world hero, Jehovah's instrument of speedy redemption and restoration.

With an ecstasy of triumph, the unknown prophet points to Cyrus, as he marches on conquering and to conquer. "Who hath raised up one from the east, whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot? he giveth nations before him, and maketh him rule over kings; he giveth them as the dust to his sword, as the driven stubble to his bow" (Isa. 41:2; *cf.* 41:25). Cyrus is Jehovah's shepherd, who shall perform all Jehovah's pleasure, and Jehovah hath said of Jerusalem, she shall be built, and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid (44:28). The prophet sings of Cyrus, anointed of Jehovah, surnamed indeed by Jehovah, although he does not know him. All unconscious of his divine commission, Cyrus is going to make the rough places smooth, and to break in pieces the doors of brass, all for the liberty and the glad home-coming of Jehovah's people.[4]

> Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the rough places smooth; I will break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that it is I, Jehovah, who call thee by thy name, even the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am Jehovah, and there is none else; besides me there is no God. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me.—Isa. 45:1-5.

[3] "Cuneiform Parallels," p. 382ff.

[4] But see Iris. Bi., Vol. IV, p. 62, for view that the word "Cyrus" is interpolated, and that this, like the other prophecies of Chapters 40 to 66, is post-exilic.

Fifteenth Week, Fourth Day.

b. *The Religious Grounds of Hope.*

The exiles' hope of return to Jerusalem had a purely religious as well as a political foundation. As we have seen, the hope was cherished before Cyrus appeared above the horizon. The hope was based upon the character of God, as conceived by Ezekiel and his prophetic friends. To understand their ground of hope, we may turn first to Ezekiel 16, which has been called the prophet's "most evangelical chapter." Of it a writer says: "There is none in the Book of Ezekiel, at once so powerful, and so full of religious significance as the picture of Jerusalem, the foundling child, the unfaithful spouse, the abandoned prostitute." Let us look at the picture. Jerusalem, a little outcast child with no claims and no rights, is left unpitied, untended, in the open field. Jehovah sees her, cares for her through the growing years, at last makes her his bride, bestows upon her glorious adornments, luxurious food. But she gives herself over to the impure love of other deities, uses Jehovah's love-gifts as love-offerings to these new lovers; yes, she takes the children which she has borne to Jehovah and slays them, delivers them up as sacrifices to her lovers. She actually pays for her harlotry, until her heathen alliances bring her to utter poverty. What shall be her punishment? All her lovers shall turn upon her, strip her, and stone her. Thus does Ezekiel with stern realism compel us to walk in the same circle of ideas as did Hosea. But now he goes further. He brings Jerusalem into contrast with Samaria, even with Sodom. These were not as wicked as Jerusalem. Jerusalem has made the sin of Samaria, the sin of Sodom itself, to seem but a light thing, and has comforted them in the thought that their sins have been innocuous. But there is a brighter side of the picture. Samaria is to be restored, even Sodom is to be restored. And Jerusalem, sin-sick at last, stirred to shame by the sight of her cleansed and restored "sisters," will be forgiven. Incredible as it may

seem, Jehovah will establish his everlasting covenant with her, and restore her to her ancient glory.

The teaching of the passage is very great. The basest of all sins is the sin of ingratitude. Sin and suffering grow from the same stem.

"And sorrow tracketh wrong
As echo follows song,
On, on, on."

But hope is not dead, because God is good. The most loathsome and ruined portions of God's world are not excluded from the range and redemptive purpose of God's love. Sodom herself, the very synonym of sin's doom, is to be saved.

Furthermore, the redemption of those utterly "lost" will stir to shame the sinners, who have been the more favored recipients of God's mercies, and will lead them to penitence, which leads to salvation. Ezekiel here has a glimpse of that vision which was one day to thrill and satisfy the questioning heart of Paul, as he looked out upon the unbelief of his own people and the acceptance of Christianity by the Gentiles. Paul held that the Gentiles would be saved and that their salvation would inspire Israel to godly jealousy, which would lead them in their turn to the feet of Paul's Master, Christ (Rom. 10, 11).

To Ezekiel the restoration of his people and of his city was not an item in the policy of this or that king; nor yet was it to be at all a reward of Israel's virtue; nor yet was it—as the false prophets supposed—a necessity to the continuance of Jehovah's rule and worship in the world. The hope was founded upon his conviction of Jehovah's self-consistency, as a God of amazing, forgiving, redeeming love (Ezek. 36:22, 32).

The Prophet of the Exile, who seemed to stake his hope so largely upon the political achievements of Cyrus, accounted Cyrus only as one instrument of Jehovah, the sovereign, the eternal, the unchangeable, the loving.

When a friend flouted the poet Sill upon the futility of "words, words, words," the poet was tempted at first to grant their futility, but checked himself:

> "Nay, they do bear a blessing and a power,—
> Great words and true, that bridge from soul to soul
> The awful cloud-depths that betwixt us roll.
> I will not have them so blasphemed. This hour,
>
> This little hour of life, this lean to-day,—
> What were it worth but for those mighty dreams
> That sweep from down the past on sounding streams
> Of such high-thoughted words as poets say?
>
> What, but for Shakespeare's and for Homer's lay,
> And bards whose sacred names all lips repeat?
> Words,—only words; yet, save for tongue and pen
>
> Of those great givers of them unto men,
> And burdens they still bear of grave and sweet,
> This world were but for beasts, a darkling den."

Fifteenth Week, Fifth Day.

Read Isa. 40: 13-31. With its sublime conviction of the one universal, strong, and loving God, it is a passage of divine beauty.

Of all the words which have helped to save the world from being a den for beasts, the words of the unknown Prophet of the Exile have been among those most richly freighted with blessing and with power. Consider the prophet's conception of God, which assured him that God must bring His people home.

Take his thought of the sovereignty of Jehovah.

> Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?—Isa. 40: 12.

This God of the prophet created the stars, brings out their hosts by number, calls each one of them by name. He

stretches out the heavens as a curtain or gauze, spreads them out as a tent to dwell in (40:22, 26). He makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters (43:16).

Sovereign of nature, the prophet's God is the sovereign of nations and men. The mightiest warrior of the "heathen" world is anointed to do his pleasure (45:13). He brings princes to nothing, makes the judges of the earth as vanity; he blows upon them, and they wither, and the whirlwind takes them away as stubble.

Or study the prophet's thought of the eternity and the unchangeableness of Jehovah. He is the first and the last; he faints not, and is never weary. He has his plans, stretching back to the beginning, to the foundations of the earth, and stretching forward into the ages of ages.

> Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour. I have declared, and I have saved, and I have showed. . . . Yea, since the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who can hinder it?—Isa. 43: 10-13. *Cf.* 40:28.

Again, study the prophet's conception of Jehovah's love. It is a love which means strong deliverance.

> O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins. . . .
>
> I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake; and I will not remember thy sins. —Isa. 44:21, 22; 43:25.

It is a love which means saving companionship.

> When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. —Isa. 43:2, cf. 41:10.

> He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly

> fall: but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.—Isa. 40:29-31.

There is no chance for "foreign gods" in this man's theology. There are no "vacant spaces" in his universe, where little deities can find room to rule and curse men. He is a magnificent monotheist. In words which Hosea would have enjoyed, he derides the idol-maker at his work:

> He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the holm-tree and the oak, and strengtheneth for himself one among the trees of the forest: he planteth a fir-tree, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn; and he taketh thereof, and warmeth himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread: yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. . . . And none calleth to mind, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?—Isa. 44:14-17, 19, 20.

He loves to watch the poor old Babylonian idols, weighing down the beasts that carry them off into captivity; and then with mighty oratory and conviction he cries in God's name:

> Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, that have been borne by me from their birth, that have been carried from the womb; and even to old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; yea, I will carry, and will deliver.—Isa. 46:3, 4.

And beneath his withering, exultant words, the magnificent gold-covered gods of the city of Babylon become stolid lumps of stone, or "chunks" of wood, to "stay put" wherever they are placed, and to burden any one who worships them; while Jehovah rises before the vision as the great burden-bearer of men, loving, lifting, carrying.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

E'en down to old age all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love:
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne."

It was, then, the character of Jehovah, rather than the character of Cyrus, which quickened the hope of the prophet that God himself would build the City Beautiful.

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will set thy stones in fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of precious stones. And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee.—Isa. 54: 11-14.

Fifteenth Week, Sixth Day.

Read Ezek. 18, sometimes called the Magna Charta of personal religion.

The prophetic hope of return, based thus largely upon the prophetic faith in a God of character, became a mighty appeal to repentance and character on the part of the exiles. The

hope joined with other factors in placing new emphasis upon the individual, upon the importance of the inwardness of religion, and at the same time the importance of ritual.

4. The Exilic Emphasis upon the Individual

> The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.
>
> But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his transgressions that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord Jehovah; and not rather that he should return from his way, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? None of his righteous deeds that he hath done shall be remembered: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.
>
> Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel: Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?—Ezek. 18: 20-25.

The great hope was itself a winnowing fan. Many a well-to-do exile would say: "Babylon is good enough for me. I am a cosmopolite. I have no special interest in a Zionist movement." The appeal of the hope, therefore, tended to liberate the individual from the mass. But experience as well as hope worked in the same direction. The Exile had torn its victims from the temple, from all the old moorings of communal religion. Many a child had been snatched from his parents, many a father from his family. Thus the old unity, the old solidarity of Oriental life had been broken up, and the individual emerged.

Further, the hideous wrongs of the Exile after a time led

its victims to feel that they were caught in the mesh and tangle of their fathers' sins. The individual came to feel that he, he, the man, was not getting a square deal. "The way of the Lord is not equal." "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek. 18: 25, 2). If the men who cause a world war could all be taken to a desert island, which should then be swept by a tidal wave, there would be some poetic justice in Jehovah's dealings with men! We have already noticed that before the Exile there was a revolt against the criminal code which dragged the family of Achan with him to death. We observed that the Deuteronomic Code, while not self-consistent, aimed to give effect to more human thought (p. 267). Now the exiles who rebelled against the injustice of an earthly judge who should involve in punishment all the relatives of a guilty man, felt that Jehovah himself was acting the part of the unjust judge. They were doubtless sinners, but they felt that their sufferings were utterly disproportionate to their sins.

In Jeremiah 31:29, we find the expression of the thought that one day the individual is to have a chance: "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge."

Ezekiel as pastor of the exiles faced, not a nation, but individuals, multitudes of them, who said quite simply and quite undeniably: "Our fathers sinned, and are not, and we bear their iniquities." Ezekiel did his best to answer them. He started with the assertion, in Jehovah's name: "All souls are mine." Each man stands in immediate relation to God. If a man is just, he shall live. But if this man have a son who is unjust, the son shall die, his blood shall be upon him. Now if this son beget a son, who sees his father's evil ways, and turns to righteousness; then he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. In a word, no man can be damned or saved by the deeds of his father or his

son. A man's own sins alone can ruin him; his own repentance can assure him life-giving relations to God (Ezek. 18).

It is not probable that Ezekiel's words gave complete satisfaction to his hearers. The facts apparently gave the lie to the brave words. Nor can they satisfy us, unless we live in the realm of the psalmist's thought, who was able to say:

Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth;
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
—Psalm 73: 24-26.

The prophet could have argued more effectively if he had been able to name the name Eternity. But Ezekiel 18 has had great influence upon the religious thinking of the world, and, as said above, has been called a kind of Magna Charta of personal religion.

The liberation of the individual spirit from the prison house of communal custom, tradition, cruelty, has been a slow and incomplete process. "Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?" "Hath any of the members of my lodge, my fraternity, my sorority, believed on him?" So we still make the crowd, or the ancient custom, or the ancient communal creed our jailer.

"To his own master, each man standeth or falleth."

This is the message of Ezekiel.

Fifteenth Week, Seventh Day.

5. The Exilic Emphasis upon the Inwardness of Religion

Read Ezek. 36: 22-38, a memorable prophecy of the religion of spirit.

As the exiles were led by their hope and by their experience

to a new emphasis upon the individual, some of them certainly were led to a new emphasis upon the inwardness of true religion.

They had brought across the desert to Babylon the manuscripts of the ancient story of their people; they probably held as cherished possessions the writings of the great prophets of northern Israel and Judah. Far away from the active, eager life of Jerusalem, the exiles became a literary people, working over, commenting upon, altering the messages of their national literature. Perhaps the central teaching of all that literature, not excepting the legal codes, may be summarized in this: True religion is not a matter of ceremonialism but of character.

The earlier exiles were in frequent correspondence with Jeremiah. His religion, utterly distinct from ritual, must have made a deep impression upon all who knew him. In a prophecy embedded in the book of Jeremiah there is a remarkable passage which reads: "And it shall come to pass, when ye are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they miss it; neither shall it be made any more" (Jer. 3:16). The ancient ark was apparently carried away into Babylon by Nebuchadrezzar, and seems never to have been seen by the Hebrews in the aftertime. The prophecy, while not certainly by Jeremiah, is true to his spirit and tendency. It means this: That ark, which in the olden times was regarded as the "focus of divine energies," that ark which was the center of religion, in the good time coming would not even be thought of, nor remembered. Religion would be able to get along without that which had been conceived as its very heart.

But perhaps the most influential expression of the thought of the inwardness of religion is given us in another passage of Jeremiah, of which Driver says: "In spirituality and profundity of insight, Jeremiah here surpasses every other prophet of the Old Testament." Whether written by Jere-

miah or by a son of his spirit, the words well deserve the praise.[5]

> Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.—Jer. 31:31-34.

The passage sends our thoughts back to the day when Moses and his people are said to have ratified with blood their covenant with Jehovah—that contract whose human obligations were set down on tables of stone. It sends our thoughts forward to that later, greater day, when at the Last Supper Jesus took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood"; and we enter with new sympathy into the thought of our Lord, as he would say: "In the days of Moses, men obeyed laws, imposed from without, and they obeyed because they had to obey. The prophet promised the new era, which I proclaim. Henceforth shall men obey the law of righteousness from inward impulse, not from outward compulsion. They will be good, do good, not because they must, but because they will." The prophet's word opens up the fountain from which Paul was to drink so freely: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the

[5] Some writers insist that the words express simply the devotion of a late scribe to the written law.

letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:5, 6). Our Bible is divided into the Old and the New Covenants. The titles are a tribute to the great thought of our passage.

In its emphasis upon the inwardness of true religion, this passage finds a companion in Ezekiel 36, which "reads like a fragment of a Pauline epistle."

> And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them.—Ezek. 36:25-27.

But—and here we mark a profound distinction between Ezekiel and his predecessor, Jeremiah—if we should ask Ezekiel, "What are these ordinances and statutes in which you propose that your people walk?" he would probably answer: "They are the law codes cherished by the priests. In the good day coming, there will be *a loyal heart-devotion to an outward law.*" Far from identifying religion with ceremonialism, always insisting upon spiritual cleansing and the transformation of the stony heart, Ezekiel does elevate law, ritual, ceremony, in a way which would have been obnoxious to the earlier prophets.

Sixteenth Week, First Day.

6. The Exilic Emphasis upon "the Righteousness of the Law"

We are thus led to notice that in the time of the Exile, along with a superb emphasis upon the inwardness of religion, there was inculcated by Ezekiel and his comrades an extraordinary emphasis upon ritual. Amos's God hates, de-

spises, the religious feasts; Hosea's God will have, not sacrifice, but leal-love and justice; Isaiah's God "cannot away with wickedness and worship"; Jeremiah's God has no interest in frankincense from Sheba and the sweet cane from a far country. But a commentator, Whitehouse, makes this suggestive remark:

"While Jeremiah's tendency was spiritual and ideal, Ezekiel's was constructive and practical. And he set himself the task, even in the midnight darkness of Israel's exile, to prepare for the nation's renewed life. The external bases of Israel's religion had been swept away, and in exchange for these, Jeremiah had led his countrymen to the more permanent inward grounds of spiritual renewal. But a religion could not permanently subsist in this world of space and time, without some concrete embodiment."

Americans who today neglect or depreciate the church and its services, might find, if they would study the Bible, considerable aid and comfort in the earlier prophets. But they fail to realize, what Ezekiel clearly understood, that a religion without some "concrete embodiment" becomes so ethereal that it vanishes into ether. The temple destroyed, the ark lost, the sacrifices discontinued, the priesthood disorganized, how long could the Hebrew faith last in the midst of the majestic, overwhelming temples of Babylon? To meet the unquestionable need of the hour, our "priest, clad in the prophet's robe," went to work to construct his City of God, and "to anchor the old ethical standards by new ritual requirements." The latter chapters of Ezekiel deal with the new, the ideal temple, too far separated, alas, from the life, the sorrows of the people; holy, alas, with something of the holiness of taboo. These chapters deal with a priesthood limited to an ecclesiastical aristocracy, and exclude from the nobler tasks of the temple the descendants of the old-time village priests, charging them at the same time with sins which neither they nor their fathers thought to commit.[6]

[6] Badé, "The Old Testament in the Light of Today," p. 302ff.

Still further, the chapters propound an intricate system of ecclesiastical law, whereby the holy people should become indeed a people holy, set apart to Jehovah. If sin had murdered the nation, the risen nation could live by holiness. To the task of making and keeping Israel holy, Ezekiel and his friends bent all their efforts. For himself the prophet never forgot that ritual must be the slave of religion, not the substitute for religion. He knew that tables of stone might be obeyed by men with hearts of stone.

Read Ezek. 47: 1-12—the picture of the miraculous river.

One of the most beautiful pictures in the Bible is his picture of the river of God's divine beneficence, which flows from beneath the threshold of the sanctuary; which receives no tributaries, but grows deeper and deeper as it flows; which courses down through the desolate ravines; which refreshes the desert waste and transforms even the Dead Sea itself into a sea in which fish may swarm for the food of men; a river along whose banks grow trees bearing their fruit every month, the fruit for food, the leaves for healing. There are few more sublime figures of the heavenly influences issuing from the visible, organized church of God on earth. The Revelator, who drew much of his inspiration from Ezekiel, thinks of the same river, no longer refreshing the wilderness of this present world, but flowing in the midst of the golden street of the Paradise of God.

Nor should one forget the description of Jehovah's return in glory to the new and glorified temple, now to dwell forever with his people. To the prophet the most majestic sanctuary was simply a mass of cedar and hewn stone until Jehovah should come to make it the place of the soles of his feet. The Jerusalem of which he dreamed held no allurements for him unless its other name might be "Jehovah is there."

But who has not discovered that it is easier to be a good churchman than a good man? "There is nothing a man will not do to evade spirituality."

There had been days when Ezekiel's searching words had been to his hearers simply "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument" (Ezek. 33:32). But after 586 B. C. his words became law. "The old joyous communion with God, which characterized the ancient Hebrews, passed away, and now there came to be an elaborate ritual with fasts and feasts, with days of atonement, which expressed the heavy consciousness of sin, and the earnest longing for reconciliation with a righteous God."

Sixteenth Week, Second Day.

Read Lev. 19, noting laws of ritual enforced by same sanctions as laws of purity, philanthropy, and hospitality. Observe especially the attitude of the chapter toward strangers.

In Leviticus, Chapters 17 to 26, we have a code of laws which was probably compiled and developed in the age of the Exile. Because of its insistence on moral and ceremonial holiness, it is commonly called the Holiness Code. It enunciates many just and generous laws of conduct; but also laws for feasts and fasts and priesthood, which show a tendency to ritualistic emphasis, which would one day bring on "the night of legalism." "Have we lost the ark? The law is ours. Have we lost the sacred building? We have still the Sabbath." The exilic writers who thus codified and expanded the ancient laws did not make the old mistake of identifying religion with ritual. They sought to win for themselves and for their fellow-exiles the holiness of character. They believed that by a hearty devotion to God's outward law of just dealing and ritual sanctity they were expressing and fostering a hearty response to God's will. Now it is quite certain that the outward manifestation of patriotism by the salute to the flag and by rising to the singing of the national anthem fosters patriotism; it is equally certain that the *symbols* of devotion, the closing of the eyes, the kneeling or the rising for prayer, foster the *spirit* of devotion. Songs of fellow-

ship tend to create actual fellowship. But an iron-molder whose chief interest is his mold ought to lose his job. The preacher whose chief interest is his elocution is false to his high calling. The devotee who is supremely anxious to get the correct point of compass, that he may pray toward Jerusalem or Mecca, has missed the meaning of prayer. In their very effort to create a holy people, the law-makers were fashioning chains from which, in Jesus' day, men could scarcely extricate themselves to attain to the glorious liberty of the children of God. Very soon the law-makers began to ostracize the law-breakers. The Sabbath lost its festal joy. Its observance was guarded by restrictions and taboos.

7. The Exiles' Ideal of Manhood

The manhood developed by the emphases of the Exile was very different from that of the prophetic ideal of earlier days. The destruction of Jerusalem was the death of the nation. The rebuilding of Jerusalem would be, not the revival of the nation, but the establishment of a church. No longer then does the prophetic thought picture the man of God going forth to meet the daily life, to master it with justice and lovingkindness.[7] Rather, the righteous man is one who, to use the words of a later prophet, is bathed in "the fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

The newer ideal of the religious life is portrayed for us in the almost matchless word, already quoted, written probably shortly after the Exile: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15). "God has two thrones, one in the highest heaven, the other in the humblest heart."

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[7] Suggestion of George Adam Smith.

Sixteenth Week, Third Day.

8. The Holy People and the Gentile World: Contrasted Emphases

Read Ezek. 39, a picture of the destruction of destroyers, which left a deep impression upon subsequent Jewish life and thought.

a. *The Vengeance of Faith.*

As the prophets of the Exile thought upon the City of God, what attitude did they take toward foreign nations? Ezekiel, who gives us his gospel of redemption even for Samaria and for Sodom, yet hurls his curses with terrific vehemence against many of the great nations of his time. With picturesque detail he describes the city of Tyre, of whose merchants it has been said: "They traveled and traded farther than any other nation of antiquity. They sought, not to gain the whole world, but to get gain from the whole world." The prophet's description only makes more tragic the city's doom.

> Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the heart of the seas. Thy riches, and thy wares, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the dealers in thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, with all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the heart of the seas in the day of thy ruin.—Ezek. 27: 26, 27.

Again, in grandiose fashion he describes Egypt and other hated nations as down in Sheol, meeting together in the grim and dusty realm of the shades.

With Ezekiel's conception of holiness, it is clear that he could permit no foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to enter his ideal sanctuary (Ezek. 44: 9). His "holy" hatred of foreigners reaches its climax in a lurid picture of the great conflict before the ultimate peace. He sees vast hordes of savage troops sweeping down from the north as, in the days of his childhood, Zephaniah and Jeremiah had seen the

Scythians coming down upon Palestine. But the wild army does not come, as in the thought of the earlier prophets, as the rod of Jehovah's anger against Israel. Suddenly, just as their fatal blow is to be launched, the Lord God will call unto all his mountains for a sword, every man's sword will be against his brother. Bow and arrows will be struck from the hands of every savage. Birds and beasts of every kind are furnished with a glorious banquet of flesh and blood. As one reads, one is reminded of Zephaniah's picture of Jehovah's sacrificial feast. But to Zephaniah the victims of the feast were the sinners of Jerusalem. Now the victims are to be the enemies of Jehovah's people. Some seven months "the house of Israel" shall devote to the burial of their foes; for seven years they shall need to take no wood from the field or forest, because of the abundance of wood furnished by the abandoned weapons of their enemies (Ezek. 38 and 39). This path of thought was to be crowded by later writers.

Obadiah, shortest and fiercest of the prophecies, apparently gathered most of its material from the period of the Exile, or at any rate breathed the atmosphere of the period.[8]

Edom was Judah's near neighbor, nearest kinsman, relentless and insatiable enemy. The little book grievously reproaches Edom for standing aloof in the day when strangers entered the holy city, and cast lots upon Jerusalem; for cutting off those who were trying to escape. But the book breathes not alone reproach but revenge. Bitter, unforgiving, the prophet predicts and almost prays for the day of Edom's doom.

> The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars,

[8] Many battles of the scholars have been fought over this tiny prophecy. It uses and adds to a message which we now read in Jeremiah 49. Bits of the prophecy have been scattered by commentators over two or three centuries. One kindly critic, in trying to satisfy all the puzzling facts, decides: "Probably the book was composed in the early part of the Exile, an ancient oracle being utilized, and additions may have been made after the Exile."

> I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jehovah. . . . As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head.—Obad. 1:3, 4, 15.

The temper of the prophecy is alien to the spirit of Jesus. The prophet has not heard the word of the Master, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The day would come, when a gentle, sacrificial woman, about to become the victim of judicial murder, would be able to say, "I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred nor bitterness toward anyone." We shall hear some such Christlike voices, as we go on in our study even of pre-Christian days. But behind the bitterness and revenge of Obadiah, there is a victorious faith, which bids defiance to all the seeming facts of life, and knows that Jehovah and Jehovah's side are going to win. This glorious faith, which makes one willing "to live hard," transfigured by the generous spirit of Christ finds expression in the words of an American prophet of the new social order:

"The kingdom of God is the greatest fight for which men ever enlisted, and the biggest game that was ever played. The odds are always against you. It is just as if a lone little eleven on the gridiron should see the whole crowd from the bleachers pouring down into the field and lining up against them. Yet you know in your soul that you are bound to win, for God is playing on your side, and God has unusual staying powers. All who have ever fought for the kingdom of God know that there is a strange joy in it. . . . There is even a stern sense of humor as you watch the crowd rolling down on you and you wait to be trampled on."[9]

Old Obadiah knew that he and his side were going to win, but he could see no way of winning without the defeat and the doom of the opposing side.

Sixteenth Week, Fourth Day.

b. *The Hospitality of Faith.*

Happily, another path of thought was pursued by some

[9] Rauschenbusch, "Christianizing the Social Order," p. 102.

heroic souls in the bitter days of the Exile. It is probable that disciples of Jeremiah were familiar with the words which we now read in Jer. 18:7, 8: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." There is a length and breadth and sweep about this prophecy which no man who heard it could forget.

In messages which we have assigned provisionally to the Prophet of the Exile, we come upon similar words: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. 45:22). Saved—but how? By ceremonialism? No. By worship at a designated shrine in Jerusalem? No. "Look unto me"! Those words must have shocked the advocates of special privilege; but they must have found welcome in many devout hearts. Indeed there is a law of the Holiness Code, which, if obeyed, would introduce into the life of every exile a genial hospitality toward foreigners. Note the generosity of the law: "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God" (Lev. 19:33, 34).

c. *The Service of Faith.*

Hospitality involves service. While some teachers, influential with the people, could see no better fate for the "heathen" than their destruction, there were prophets who saw the King in his beauty, and beheld a land of far distances. These men believed that Israel's supremacy was to be won by service, that the Israel within Israel had a mission, not alone of national, but of universal salvation.

(1) The Servant of Jehovah.

This thought of service and saviourhood finds supreme ex-

pression in passages usually dated in, or shortly after, the period of the Exile. In Isaiah 41:8ff., 44:1-5, 44:21ff., 45:4, Israel is Jehovah's Servant, who, because of his relation to Jehovah, will be guarded, guided, redeemed by him.

Several passages reach loftier heights. In words "which may be regarded as perhaps the noblest in Hebrew poetry," the writer speaks to the ideal Israel:

> And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him (for I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God is become my strength); yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.—Isa. 49:5, 6.

Few men today cherish a view of God and of the world as generous as this. But no man who reads those words dare exclude from his hoped-for Republic of God India or China or any remote island of the Pacific, or any near and disliked race, or any national foe, however hated and hateful.

Again in Isaiah 42:1ff., we have the thought of Jehovah's Servant, commissioned to instruct, illuminate, emancipate the nations, "delivering them from the prisonhouse of error and despair."

> Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. . . . I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.—Isa. 42:1-4, 6, 7.

Here, too, the Servant seems to be Israel, or rather, the Israel within Israel, those who bore within their hearts the ideals of Israel. It has been remarked, "There are stomach-Germans, and there are soul-Germans." There are stomach-Americans; then, thank God, there are soul-Americans. Some writers would think of the Servant of Jehovah here as "the genius" of Israel, or the ideal Israelite. The messages probably contemplate the soul-Jews.

The prophets of wrath for the nations may have buried the messages of service, but those messages, like the Master whose spirit dwelt in the prophets who uttered them, could not be holden of death.

Sixteenth Week, Fifth Day.

(2) The Servant as Sufferer.

Read Isa. 52: 13-53: 12, the noblest Old Testament explanation of faith's most grievous problem.

Most memorable among these Servant passages are those which consider the Servant as the innocent, gentle, vicarious, victorious sufferer.

> The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore have I not been confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand up together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.
>
> Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant? he that walketh in darkness,

> and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rely upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk ye in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.—Isa. 50:4-11.

In the passage quoted we have for the first time the Servant characterized as martyr. Wakened morning after morning by Jehovah's voice, not rebellious to any divine monition, the Servant yields his back to the smiters, his cheeks to them that pluck off the hair, nor hides his face from shame and spitting; for he knows that Jehovah will help him, that he will not be put to shame. This passage vividly pictures the experience and the triumphant conviction of devout Israelites. The words were very dear to Paul (see Rom. 8:31-34) and were close to the heart of Paul's Master. They remind us of that true saying: "The best way to overcome is to undergo."

In Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 the Servant is despised (see also 49:7), rejected of men, an innocent but submissive sufferer, one who at length meets an unjust death, is buried ingloriously. But,

> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Isa. 53:4-6.

So speak the nations, or the Gentiles, who at first had been startled, struck dumb, by what they had heard (Isa. 52:15-53:1), who now understand at last that all of the Servant's sufferings have been for them, for them!

But the suffering Servant becomes the victorious Redeemer, to "take his place with mighty conquerors, and to rejoice in his mission, the redemption of the world."

> He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.—Isa. 53: 11, 12.

All the early world believed that righteousness meant prosperity, that adversity was invariably the punishment for sin —personal sin, or the communal sin, in which the individual was caught as in a trap. The Exile was explained as the true and inevitable issue of sin. But, as we have seen, there was a growing protest against the doctrine that all suffering is penal. The second generation of exiles felt keenly that they were innocent sufferers. "Our fathers sinned and are not, and we bear their iniquities."

But is there no other explanation of the suffering of the innocent? The Semitic world was familiar with the sacrifices by which the sins of the people were borne by the innocent victim on the altar. As the people looked back upon a man like Jeremiah, they must have seen that through his very suffering he, though innocent, had helped forward the cause of the people whom he loved, for whom his very body had become a living sacrifice. As the writer searched his own experience and that of the poor and pious lovers of Jehovah among his friends, there may well have come to him the divine instruction that this woeful experience of innocent sufferers might yet bring redemption even to their conquerors, who had brought them to an inglorious national death, the grave of exile. The great words were written for the instruction and inspiration of the prophet's contemporaries. But neither Israel, nor the Inner Circle of Israelites, nor yet Jeremiah, fills full the ideal presented here of the Suffering, Saving Servant of Jehovah. The idea that the prophet looked forward consciously down the centuries to the cross of Jesus' death, the garden of his burial and his resurrection, may not

perhaps be dogmatically denied, yet cannot be defended. But Jesus incarnated, enfleshed the ideal of the prophet.

The prophecy has opened up to all subsequent generations of men the true and only certain method of world-redemption. The mothers of the world long ago discovered it.

"You struggled blindly for my soul
And wept for me such bitter tears
That through your faith my faith grew whole
And fearless of the coming years.

For in the path of doubt and dread
You would not let me walk alone,
But prayed the prayers I left unsaid
And sought the God I did disown.

You gave to me no word of blame,
But wrapped me in your love's belief,
Dear love, that burnt my sin like flame,
And left me worthy of your grief."[10]

The missionaries of the world long ago discovered it for themselves. Hannington, in a filthy hut, surrounded by savages who were about to kill him, says to his murderers: "Tell the king, Mwanga, that I die for the Baganda, and purchase the road to Uganda with my life." Chalmers of New Guinea, who was one day to die at the hands of cannibals, says: "Recall the twenty-one years, give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standings in the face of death, give it me surrounded with savages with spears and clubs, give it me back again with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give it me back, and I will still be your missionary."

Moreover the "nations" have responded to the appeal of vicarious suffering as to no other appeal. Arthur Jackson of Manchuria, the athlete, scholar, physician of England, goes down to the railroad station of Mukden, and there examines hundreds of Chinese trappers, many of whom are stricken by the plague. At last Jackson himself dies of the plague;

[10] Hester I. Radford, "The Mother," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1910.

and non-Christian Chinese papers commenting upon his death use words like these:

"Now he has given his only life for the lives of others, we see that he was a true Christian, who has done what Jesus did thousands of years ago."

"He did the will of God, to die for all."

"His death in labouring for our country was actually carrying out the Christian principle of giving up one's life to save the world."

And the Viceroy speaking at his memorial service closed with these words:

"O spirit of Dr. Jackson, we pray you intercede for the twenty million people of Manchuria, and ask the Lord of Heaven to take away this pestilence, so that we may once more lay our heads in peace upon our pillows.

In life you were brave, now you are an exalted Spirit. Noble Spirit, who sacrificed your life for us, help us still, and look down in kindness upon us all!"[11]

"The value of a redeeming personality depends upon the richness of the self given and the depth of the giving." Paul well understood this when he underscored the great word of Phil. 2:9, *"Wherefore."*

> Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. 2:5-11.

Few men of his century followed the path of the prophet's thought, but it was never overgrown with wire-grass and for-

[11] From the remarkably interesting book, by Dugald Christie, "Thirty Years in the Manchu Capital," p. 241ff.

gotten. And one dares to hope that our own century will see that path of thought—now made so clear to men by Jesus—pursued by multitudes.

"'Twas said, 'When roll of drum and battle's roar
Shall cease upon the earth, O, then no more
The deed, the race, of heroes in the land.'
But scarce that word was breathed when one small hand
Lifted victorious o'er a giant wrong
That had its victims crushed through ages long;
Some woman set her pale and quivering face,
Firm as a rock, against a man's disgrace;
A little child suffered in silence lest
His savage pain should wound a mother's breast;
Some quiet scholar flung his gauntlet down
And risked, in Truth's great name, the synod's frown;
A civic hero, in the calm realm of laws,
Did that which suddenly drew a world's applause;
And one to the pest his lithe young body gave
That he a thousand thousand lives might save."
—Richard Watson Gilder.

"When we cease to bleed, we cease to bless."

Sixteenth Week, Sixth Day.

9. The Holy People and Their King

The Exilic Conception of the "Messiah."

Read Ezek. 34, whose importance, literary and religious, is suggested by the present Study.

As Ezekiel and his friends painted the golden morrow on their midnight's sky of rain, they pictured the restoration of the old Northern Kingdom (see p. 317), and its reunion with Judah. But if the ancient kingdom of David is to come once more, is the kingdom to have no king? In the days of the First Exile, apparently before the final overthrow of Jerusalem, Ezekiel in Jehovah's name commands the crown to be taken from the head of the unworthy Zedekiah (p. 298), but goes on with words breathing new hope: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no more, until he

come, whose right it is, and I will give it him" (Ezek. 21: 26, 27). A rightful ruler, then, shall one day wear the crown.

In his 34th chapter, after dooming the greedy shepherds who feed upon the sheep which they are supposed to feed, Ezekiel again hears Jehovah speak: "Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among the sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep. . . . I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep" (vs. 11, 12, 15). But he continues:

> And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it.—34: 23, 24.

The chapter has great beauty and significance. "With us," says George Adam Smith, "sheep are often left to themselves, but I do not remember ever to have seen in the East a flock of sheep without a shepherd. In such a landscape as Judea, where a day's pasture is thinly scattered over an unfenced tract of country, covered with delusive paths, still frequented by wild beasts, and rolling off into the desert, the man and his character are indispensable. On some high moor, across which at night the hyenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, far-sighted, weather-beaten, armed, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why the shepherd sprang to the front in his people's history, why they gave his name to their king, and made him the symbol of Providence, why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice."

Our chapter lies very close to the beginning of a noble literary development; but further, "it is one of the most important in tracing the development of Israel's messianic hope." Here Jehovah is himself the shepherd of his people, yet he ministers his shepherdhood through a prince of the Davidic line.

In a later chapter, the 45th, the prophet gives us a picture of the prince of the house of David, which would by no means

have satisfied David, and would not satisfy even the little exiled king Jehoiachin liberated from his prisonhouse. The civic duties of the future prince are almost ignored. Now his main function is to serve the interests of the temple, to eat before Jehovah, and to provide certain sacrifices for the priests. With this conception of its ruler, the nation becomes indeed a church.

Exilic writers probably gave little thought to the Messiah, and attributed to him little of religious value.

Sixteenth Week, Seventh Day.

Concluding Note

An Exile's Retrospect and Prospect.

If an old and enlightened exile, who could still remember the fall of Jerusalem, had attempted in 538 B. C. to count up the gains and losses of the years, he might have set down some such words as these:

"When, with breaking hearts and broken fortunes, we started upon the desolate journey to Babylon, all the old landmarks, all the old foundations of life were swept away. We had thought that Jehovah was dependent upon us, that he must for his own sake, yes, for his own safety, protect the city, the sanctuary, the citizens of Jerusalem. We could and did worship other gods. We could and did worship Jehovah with immoral rites. We permitted our priests and prophets to deceive and rob the poor, if only they spoke to us fair things and performed the orderly rites of the temple. We could and did break faith with our slaves, and cast into a miry dungeon the bravest man in Jerusalem. But there has come to us a new revelation of Jehovah. We are surrounded by the gorgeous temples of the gods of the nations; but we know that Persia and Egypt and Tyre and the mighty hordes of northern savages are all subject to the will of Jehovah. The gods are no-gods. We confess that we did think of Jehovah as living in a little tent, whose floor was the land of

Judah; we know now that heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him.

We know, too, that Jehovah is the God of history, of events. The transactions of world politics but magnify Jehovah and assure mankind that he is the Lord. But we know, too, that Jehovah is the God of the individual, to whom each individual stands in personal relations. We know that Jehovah is a forgiving and a redeeming God, who dooms no man because of his relatives, or because of his own record, who delights to give even the most 'lost' and abandoned a second chance. We know, too, that God's Spirit moves upon the hearts of communities and of individuals, stirring them as by divine breath to renewed life and power.

We know now that the worship of Jehovah is not, cannot, be monopolized by a single shrine. In our exile, without the temple, we have had such intimate fellowship with Jehovah as Jeremiah knew in the earlier days. We gather in our assemblies—a new and wonderfully helpful feature of our life—we read together the story of our race, as our scribes have copied and compiled its documents for our edification; we ponder and seek to obey the old legislation, which to our reverent thought almost takes the place of the ancient ark; we follow with eager zest every new and generous deed of Cyrus, Jehovah's new messiah; we speak to one another of 'A wonderful day a-coming, when all shall be better than well.' Our prophet Ezekiel died some three decades ago, but we and our scribes are doing our best to keep the Sabbath law, and every other law, that in his own time Jehovah may bring us back to Zion. Not that we believe we deserve anything at the hands of our God. Jehovah is going to restore us for his own name's sake, in deference to his own self-consistency as a God of grace, who has chosen us as his people.

> 'Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all!'

And some of us have discovered that in suffering for others, the innocent for the guilty, we can find the deepest, widest

channel through which our love for our God may flow. Yes, some of us have come to believe that our own suffering may be our share in God's redemptive work for men."

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What factors in the life of the Exile would emphasize the significance of the individual?

2. What factors in the life of the Exile would emphasize religion as an inward experience rather than a matter of ceremonialism?

3. How did it happen that the period which taught the inwardness of religion should make such great advances in the study and the elaboration of "Law"?

4. Would you expect the observance of the Sabbath law and similar legislation to further religious liberty, or bondage? Is the Psalmist right, who says,

> "I shall walk at liberty;
> For I have sought thy precepts"? (Psalm 119:45).

5. Would you excuse, or explain, or justify the hostile attitude toward foreign nations illustrated by the prophecies of Ezekiel and Obadiah?

6. Why should the sufferings of the innocent be redemptive?

7. Would you regard as redemptive the sufferings of a soldier in a just cause, or would you say that only he suffers redemptively who attempts no physical resistance to wrong?

8. In what particulars would you expect the religion of an exile in 538 B. C. to differ from his religion in 586 B. C.?

CHAPTER XI

The Restored City

Currents and Cross Currents of Thought in the Persian Period (538–332 B. C.)

Seventeenth Week, First Day.

Introductory

Our studies now bring us into the Persian period. A German general remarks, "The only certainty about war is uncertainty." Almost the same statement might be made regarding the dates and data of our period. One writer says: "We are in direst need of information as to the history of the Jews in the Persian period." Fortunately the uncertainties concern matters which for our study are of quite subordinate importance.

The years are marked by the consolidation and slow disintegration of the Persian empire. They are marked, too, by the building of the second temple, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the systematization and enforcement of the priestly code, the rise of the synagogue, the appearance of the guilds of scribes, the final establishment of Judaism.

The story of the two centuries is a story of seemingly contradictory emphases of thought: ritual vs. heart-righteousness; bigotry vs. world-wide hospitality; devotion to accredited theology vs. radical skepticism. The achievements of the little-known heroes of the period and their contributions to the life of Judaism and of Christianity are beyond the power of estimation.

1. Prophets of the New Temple

a. *Haggai.*

Read Haggai 1 to 3, asking yourself whether the prophet's emphasis upon the temple can be justified in the light of the attitude of men like Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

As we have seen, the later years of the sixth century were amazed by the victories and the character of Cyrus. A prophecy from a writer of the Exile glories in the coming doom of Babylon:

> Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. And their bows shall dash the young men in pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there. And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.—Isa. 13: 17-22.

While Cyrus was himself a Zoroastrian, he knew the political value of the favorable treatment of subject gods. He prays: "May all the gods whom I brought into their own cities daily before Bel and Nebo pray for a long life for me, may they speak a gracious word for me."[1] That Cyrus should respond to the passionate longing of men whose hearts were in Zion is not strange. In the twentieth century, statesmen not famous for their religious enthusiasm have sympathized cordially with the Zionist movement. But when at last the day of possible deliverance dawned, when the ransomed of

[1] Int. Com., Ezra-Nehemiah, p. 35.

Jehovah had the chance to return to Jerusalem, it is probable that multitudes did not avail themselves of the opportunity. Many of the exiles had attained to comfort and position in Babylon, and were not greatly moved by ideal interests. However disappointing may have been the numbers who returned from Babylon, quite certainly many joined in the enterprise of patriotism who had been living in Egypt, but still counted Zion above their chief joy.

The leaders in the movement for the restoration of the city and of the temple could depend, too, upon the cordial, if ineffective, cooperation of thousands of Jews who had never known exile, but had clung to the desolated soil of the home land through all the dismal years. These poor people, whom their conquerors had not thought worth sending into exile, had kept the great memories alive, and offered sacrifices on an altar amid the temple ruins. These gladly welcomed the new leaders and the new day.

Soon after 538 B. C. a feeble political organization developed in Jerusalem. Up from the midst of rubbish heaps rose paneled houses. Ecclesiastics kept the sacrificial altar aflame with the appointed offerings.

But there came to the pathetic little community one of those ethical and religious *sags,* such as frequently occur after a season of revival, or after a great adventure of faith. The foundations of the temple may have been laid, but the people shrank from the enormous undertaking involved in erecting a temple which should for an instant compare with that of Solomon, still remembered by older men. But world politics joined with religious and nationalistic hopes to stir to life the purpose to build again the temple.

In 529 B. C. Cyrus died. His son Cambyses swept down into Egypt, and "added it to his empire." On his return from Egypt, he committed suicide. "A Magian impostor" seized the throne. He was speedily killed by a party of nobles, who enthroned one of their own number, Darius I. In this transition period, with its fears and hopes, Haggai uttered his prophecy in Jerusalem:

Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people say, It is not the time for us to come, the time for Jehovah's house to be built. Then came the word of Jehovah by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to his own house. Therefore for your sake the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth withholdeth its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.—Hag. 1:2-11.

His message was this: "Build again, and your community will live again. Nature herself curses you because of your neglect of God's house. Will you dwell in ceiled houses, while the temple lies desolate? You put on clothes, but none is warm; you put your wages in bags which are full of holes."

Seventeenth Week, Second Day.

The effect of Haggai's preaching was extraordinary. The building was pushed. Aged men standing by shook their heads, and said, "You ought to have seen the old temple. There was a temple worth building!" But Haggai replied:

Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes as nothing? . . . fear ye not. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and

> the dry land; and I will shake all nations; and the precious things of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Hag. 2:3, 5b-9.

Thus with courageous words the prophet braced the hearts of his friends for the great task.

b. *Zechariah.*

Read Zech 3 and 4 to appreciate the prophet's literary quality and his spirit.

Zechariah the priest cooperated with Haggai the layman in holding the people to their hard, almost heart-breaking task.

(1) Ritual, the Clothing, Not the Body of True Religion.

In both Haggai and Zechariah we see the persistence of the emphasis upon ritual, which we saw developing in the Exile. Like Amos, or any other pre-exilic prophet, Haggai attributes crop failure to sin; but to him the chief sin is not injustice or cruelty, but failure to build the temple. In Zechariah there is a glorious reiteration of the old prophetic teaching. People come to him to ask, "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?" (Zech. 7:3). And the prophet tells them that they have been fasting and feasting, not to please Jehovah but to please themselves. "And the word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart" (Zech. 7:8-10). There rings out the authentic prophetic note.

Again, with all his insistence on ritual, there is in Zech-

ariah a notable emphasis upon the heart religion which Jeremiah and Ezekiel knew, which finds perhaps its simple, sufficing expression in the words of Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

> Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it. Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth.—Zech. 4:6-10.

A man never ceases to marvel at this miracle of religion—a little group of weak men, meeting and mastering a great task by means of a great faith. Here, for example, we see the Pilgrims in the midst of the horrors of their first winter. At one time there were but five of the little company well enough to care for the sick and to bury the dead. In three months but fifty of the Pilgrims survived. The work of the spring was begun by twenty-one men and six growing lads. And then the Mayflower sailed back to England, and the captain was

"Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but gospel."

But

"O strong hearts and true, not one went back in the Mayflower;
No, not one looked back who had set his hand to that plowing."

Builders of a beautiful temple of God on this side of the sea, the Pilgrims knew that their weakness mated God's strength.

No man need despise or fear the day of small things if he has a great task and a great God.

> "For, note: man's hand, first formed to carry
> A few pounds' weight, when taught to marry
> Its strength with an engine's, lifts a mountain."

(2) Jerusalem, the Friendly Haven for All Souls

We noticed in Ezekiel a turgid description of the destruction of all the enemies of the house of Israel. It is impressive by contrast to read the words of Zechariah:

> And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and to seek Jehovah of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah.—Zech. 8:21, 22.

This man, who would probably call himself a second-rate prophet, who buttresses his words by the messages of previous prophets, stands forth in the sour, barren years to proclaim to a hard-pressed people, hungry at heart, that their God is going to be sought after by the mighty idolatrous nations of the world. For this man, Jehovah is the transcendent ruler of the universe, who sends his fleet messengers to all points of the compass. He is a forgiving God, who bears wickedness away to a far land. He is a God whose spirit is stronger than any earthly "might or power."

Seventeenth Week, Third Day.

(3) The New Temple and the New King.

We observed that in the Exile prophetic hearts looked forward to a prince of the House of David, who should find his chief function in serving the interests of the temple. In Haggai and Zechariah we see the high priest, Joshua, sharing the responsibility of temple-building with one Zerubbabel, the governor of the little Jewish state, "the grandson of Jehoiachin." Haggai hints quite boldly that this heir of

Davidic hopes may in the days of universal chaos at hand inherit the throne of David.

> And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Jehovah, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Hag. 2:22, 23.

Again Zechariah bids several of his friends from Babylon to make a crown (see margin) and lay it up in the temple, for the man whose name is the Branch, who shall build the temple. It is probable that the prophet is thinking of a crown, not for Joshua the high-priest (as the present reading has it) but for Zerubbabel, the heir to David's throne (Zech. 6:9-15).

From the time of these prophecies we hear no more of the activity of Zerubbabel, and it is possible that the Persian authorities thought it not well to keep as their representative in Jerusalem one whose lineage might prove political dynamite.

We shall remember Haggai and Zechariah as brothers of the spirit, responsive students of the teachings of the Exile. We shall remember them even more as the two men whose stern and hopeful words were the music to keep the weary toilers at their task of temple building.

Seventeenth Week, Fourth Day.

2. Malachi—God's Messenger to the Listless

Read Mal. 1 for the prophet's arraignment of priest and people.

During the first half of the fifth century great events were happening in the Persian Empire. Darius held his dominion over Egypt, but lost to the Greeks the decisive battle of

Marathon. In 485 B. C. his son, Xerxes, grandson of Cyrus, came to the throne. With lavish outlay of time and men and money, the new ruler determined to avenge the defeat of Marathon. Two bridges he flung across the Hellespont. A channel was dug through the peninsula of Mount Athos. But he lost the battle of Salamis (480 B. C.). The battle of Platæa completed the Persian downfall in Europe. The later days of Xerxes find him amid the intrigues of the court. In 465 B. C. he was assassinated. Artaxerxes I, his younger son, appears to have been "a kind, good-natured, but rather weak monarch." He managed to conclude a reasonable treaty with the Greeks, but his empire "had reached a period of stagnation."

In those days, when Asia was facing Europe, and the forces of the Orient were streaming into the West, the life of the restored city must have been agitated by the tides sweeping over the nations.

From the comparative darkness of the period there emerges a prophecy, called "Malachi," or "My Messenger." It throws a lurid light upon conditions in the little Jewish state at approximately the middle of the fifth century. Anyone who has helped to build a church will testify that the happiest days are not those of the completed edifice, but the days when the church is on the way to certain completion. The second temple was indeed finished. Most of those who took part in the task had passed away. The enthusiasm of the "dedication exercises" had long ago faded. And now the priests themselves were slovenly and sacrilegious in their temple service. The very table of Jehovah had become contemptible to them. "When ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil! and when ye offer the lame and sick, it is no evil!" It is possible that the priests were getting an ecclesiastical graft by substituting blemished beasts for the "perfect" beasts presented by the worshipers. Or they condoned the people's offerings of the sick, the blind, or the lame. "Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee? or will he accept thy person? saith Jehovah of hosts" (1:8).

a. *Listlessness and License.*

But behind the cold and callous formalism of the priesthood there was rottenness of personal life. The priests had turned aside out of the way and had respect of persons in the law.

Again, like priest, like people. The people were robbing God. But they wanted to know in what they were robbing God. "In tithes and offerings." Yes, the whole nation was engaged in this robbery of the "great King."

Yet with the people, too, this failure in ritual was to the prophet's thought the fruitage of a failure in morals. Sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, oppressors of course would not regard the offerings due to Jehovah.

The most grievous charge laid against the morals of the people was this: Men were divorcing their Jewish wives, and marrying "non-Jewish women belonging to the influential but mongrel families of the vicinity."[2]

b. *License and Skepticism.*

In the lives both of priests and people, behind the tired formalism and the injustice and the treachery toward the women whose trust and love of the years had been betrayed, there was a chilling skepticism. We have caught a glimpse of this skepticism before. Far back in the seventh century, Zephaniah had met men who said that Jehovah would do neither good nor evil. Malachi now faces men who say: "Jehovah claims that he loves us; wherein has he loved us?" or again, "Where is the God of justice? Everyone that does evil is good in the sight of this God of yours"; or again, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God and escape." We shall meet with more of this skepticism as

[2] Some writers hold that forbidden marriages refer to a relapse into idolatrous worship. But see Int. Com. Malachi, p. 7.

we go on in our studies. "We are tired of the exactions of this God we are supposed to worship. This tithe-giving, these sacrifices of beasts and of pleasures, bring no return. The fact is the people who defy the ritual and the moral law prosper like a green bay tree."

Is the anonymous prophet big enough to master the situation?

c. *God's Love.*

First, he insists that God loves His people. He seeks to prove it by the recent defeat of the Edomites, whose jeers and hatred and aggressions have always rankled in the breasts of the Jews. But then he insists that God's love cannot work its perfect work upon the indifferent, the heedless, the hateful.

d. *God's Love, and the Reward of Worthy Worship.*

The prophet has a profound belief in the importance of ritual:

> Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts. And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Mal. 3: 10-12.

An appropriate and ample fulfilment of the ceremonial law will mean abundant and undamaged crops, a delightsome land.

e. *God's Love, and the Reward of Worthy Conduct.*

But this insistence upon ritual does not stand alone. The prophet, while feeling the importance of the worthy organization of religion, knows well that the organization of religion can be worthful only as it is the clothing of the religion of the heart. Again we hear the familiar words, justice, kind-

ness. In a fashion found nowhere else in the Old Testament he denounces divorce. "I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel." Thus the prophet rises above the legislation of his people, which permitted polygamy and easy divorce far down to the end of the Jewish state. It is true that the immediate reason for his denunciation is the foreign marital alliances of his fellow-citizens, which prevent God's finding in Israel "a godly seed." But Malachi, with unerring wisdom, sees that the reconstruction of the family is the inexorable demand of God.

Seventeenth Week, Fifth Day.

f. *The Day of Division.*

So the prophet proclaims again The Day. For him The Day is not the day of Israel's destruction, nor yet of her salvation. The Day is a day of division. It shall burn as a furnace, for which the proud and wicked shall be as stubble. But God is keeping "a memorandum" for those that fear Jehovah and think upon his name, and in that day he will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (3: 16ff.). To the prophet's thought, the divine rewards are apparently still in the realm of the life this side the grave, but we cannot believe that immortality would be to him an impossible conception.

We see then in Malachi one who has drunk deep of the fountain of exilic inspiration. The clothes of the priest are worn by the prophet, but they do not hide the prophet nor stifle his voice. His God is the great king, above any earthly pasha. His God will brook no languid and slovenly obedience, of either the laws of ceremony or of character. But he loves—tenderly, passionately. Yes, and one is tempted to add, his God loves narrowly, with a love of Israel which involves necessarily the hatred of Edom, whom Israel hates. There is one verse which may express a very wonderful contrast with the thought of God's narrow love: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name

shall be (or *is*) great among the Gentiles (nations); and in every place incense shall be (or *is*) offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be (or *is*) great among the Gentiles (nations), saith Jehovah of hosts" (1:11). One would be glad to believe that the writer not only recognizes the sincerity of the devotion of the heathen, but actually sees, amid all the superstitions of idolatry, the ascent of the heathen heart to the unknown God, Israel's God, Jehovah. But it seems more probable that Malachi is thinking of the pure and perfect offerings made by the Jews dispersed in many lands. Jerusalem alone disgraces the throne of God's glory.

Malachi is a voice crying in the wilderness of the fifth century in the Judean state, bidding slovenly, surly, skeptical people to prepare the way of Jehovah, to make straight in the desert God's highway.

It has been questioned whether any prophet, familiar with Deuteronomy, could imagine that pure offerings might be rendered to Jehovah upon any other altar than that at Jerusalem. But in 1906-7 archeologists working upon the island of Elephantine "in the Nile, opposite Assuan, a city on the eastern bank of the river" made a most illuminating discovery. They found many papyri, written in Aramaic, and "definitely dated between the years 471 and 411 B. C." The documents give evidence of a large and flourishing Jewish colony, which must have existed for many years, perhaps as far back as the days of Jeremiah. Among the most important finds is that of a document, written in 408-7 by the Jews of Elephantine to the Persian governor of Judea. The letter tells of their own temple, with its five gates "built of hewn stone . . . with bronze hinges," speaks of its pillars of stone, and its roof, "made wholly of cedar wood." The writers go on to say that this temple was left unscathed by Cambyses, who in his day had destroyed temples of the Egyptians, but that recently a minor official with the aid of Egyptians had destroyed their temple. "And since they have done this, we with our wives and children have put on sackcloth and fasted and prayed to Jahu, the Lord of heaven." The letter be-

seeches Bagohi the governor: "If it seem good to our lord, mayest thou think about this temple to rebuild it, since we are not permitted to build it . . . And we will offer meat-offerings and frankincense and burnt offerings upon the altar of the God Jahu in thy name. And we will pray for thee at all times, we and our wives and our children and all the Jews who are here when this will be done, until the temple is built. And thou shalt have a portion before Jahu, the God of Heaven." The discovery, important for many reasons, makes it certain that, immediately after the restoration of Jerusalem and through many decades, Jews in Egypt were in all good conscience worshiping Jehovah in their own temple, although, with their easy access to Jerusalem, they may well have been familiar with the Deuteronomic Code and its demands. The discovery confirms us in our view of the favorable attitude of the earlier Persian rulers toward the Jewish faith; and further helps us to realize how the Jewish faith penetrated into the Gentile world, there to make ready for the monotheism of Jesus.[3]

Seventeenth Week, Sixth Day.

3. Nehemiah, the Builder of the Walls

Read Neh., Chapters 1 and 4, for an understanding of Nehemiah's problem and character.

Malachi looked forward to a Day of Division. As he studied his little world of Judah, he must have thought The Day at hand. The chasm was already deepening between "the wicked" and "those that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name."

In the memoirs of Nehemiah we have a dramatic picture of the situation in Jerusalem shortly after the supposed date of Malachi, and a record as well of one of the most attractive characters in the Old Testament and of one of the most significant movements in the history of the restored city.

[3] For facsimile of letter, and discussion, see Report of Smithsonian Institution, 1907, p. 605. Also see *Nineteenth Century*, 1911, p. 1135ff.

a. *Nehemiah's Call.*

Now I was cupbearer to the king. And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, when wine was before him, that I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. And the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid. And I said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him), For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.—Neh. 2: 1-6.

In every land of their sojourn the Jews have risen to positions of power. A cupbearer at the Persian court, Nehemiah held a place of distinction, at the same time a place of peril, for he held it at the pleasure of an Oriental despot. A kinsman of Nehemiah introduced to him some pilgrims from Judah, who informed him that the citizens of Jerusalem were in great distress and contempt, and that the walls of the city were broken down, and the gates burned with fire. The temple had now been standing for seventy years. The city walls which had been razed by Nebuchadrezzar in 586 B. C. had been, it would seem, partly restored, but had been breached and rendered useless by the enemies of the little Jewish state. To Nehemiah the city's distress was God's call. The genius of patriotism appears in this man. His appeal to his royal master was shrewdly stated. He did not ask to restore the ancient walls, for the request would have aroused the king's suspicions: "The city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres,

lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire" (2:3).

With authorization from Artaxerxes, and with a sufficient bodyguard, Nehemiah made his way to Jerusalem (444 B. C.). A private examination of the walls revealed facts worse than he had feared. But such were the man's skill, generalship, and resource that against frightful odds he and his comrades built the city walls, according to the record, in fifty-two days.

b. *The Democracy of Toil.*

We read that the people of the city and from the surrounding villages enrolled in the democracy of toil. Here worked the high priest and his family, there the villagers of Jericho, there the citizens of Mizpah. There were poor men, rulers of districts, princes. Goldsmiths, with hands like those of a musician, now worked in wood and stone. Women of royal blood bore upon their heads baskets filled with rubbish from the ruined walls.

Division and discord have been usually the price men have paid for democracy; but there seems to have been the most perfect coordination of the toilers. Next to the high priest builded the men of Jericho, next to them the son of Imri, next unto him . . . next unto them . . . next unto them . . . so the record reads for an entire chapter. Again, Nehemiah had the good judgment to set each man to work over against his own house. A breach in the wall, which had given a fine view into the country and given access to invaders, was stopped up by ancient stones which had been used for doorsteps and private walls. So they labored, and prayed to the God of heaven, and finished the wall. But the task was not an easy one.

c. *The Hinderers.*

(1) There were certain important people who took no part in the work. The nobles of Tekoa put not their necks to the work of the Lord (see 3:5).

(2) The peasants, who had gladly responded to the call of the patriot, were harassed by debt and oppression. The crops had been bad, and the poor had mortgaged their fields and vineyards to the rich, and were now forced to sell their very children into bondage to their own countrymen. Nehemiah summoned to him the cannibals, who would feed on their own flesh and blood, and bade them forego their usury, give back the fields and vineyards, and liberate those whom they had enslaved. The personality of the man and his own generous example won the day for the peasants and the slaves.

(3) There were three men most hostile and most dangerous to the enterprise. The first was Sanballat, mentioned in one of the Elephantine papyri as "the governor of Samaria." It will be remembered that when northern Israel fell to the Assyrians (cf. p. 227) and the best people of Samaria were carried into captivity, there were colonists from other parts of the empire who came to take their place. It is said of these colonists that they feared Jehovah and served their own gods. It would seem that they mingled somewhat freely with the poor Israelites who were left upon the land. As the years had gone on, these mongrel people were held together by governors under the appointment of the great empires which succeeded each other in the control of Asia. These people of the north came from time to time to make offerings at Jerusalem, and felt that they had as much right to the capital of Israel as did the citizens of Judah. The ancient jealousies between the north and the south had never died. Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, nursed these jealousies in his own personal or provincial interest. He saw clearly that Jerusalem, surrounded by strong walls, was no longer an easy prey and might lose to him his own leadership. A fellow-conspirator was Tobiah, the Ammonite, called in contempt "the slave." These men, with another styled "the Arabian," tried various methods to undo Nehemiah and his enterprise.

(a) They tried laughter: "What are these feeble Jews doing? will they fortify themselves? . . . will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned?

. . . if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall" (4:2, 3).

(b) They tried to trap Nehemiah into a "conference." "Let us all get together." "But they thought to do me mischief" (6:2).

(c) They tried innuendo. The Persian authorities were well aware of the nationalistic and revolutionary tendencies of the Jews. The foes of Nehemiah now charged him with announcing himself a king, with the aid of prophets appointed in the good old-fashioned way. Failing to frighten the patriot,

(d) They themselves bribed a "prophet," who sought to induce Nehemiah to conceal himself for safety (?) in the temple. As this device met with no better success,

(e) Tobiah now tried his hand alone, and entered into a vigorous correspondence with certain "nobles of Judah" who were not impressed by Nehemiah, this new representative of "the uplift," this upstart who interfered with all their vested wrongs and their social and marital customs.

Seventeenth Week, Seventh Day.

The victory and achievement of Nehemiah meant the immediate comparative safety of the city and the temple, meant therefore the persistence of the Jewish faith; it also meant the enforcement of laws which Nehemiah believed of imperative significance to the little community.

d. *Legalism for the Sake of Life.*

Nehemiah demanded the strictest observance of the Sabbath. Will a patriotic layman be so insistent upon a matter of ritual? Yes: nor are the reasons far to seek. In the land of Persia he and all his Jewish friends had found that the law of the Sabbath could be enforced even when the temple was far away. Nehemiah was sure that the ruin of his nation had been due to disobedience to Jehovah's ordinances, and that renewal could be assured only to the obedient.

But the practical man saw as well that the Sabbath could serve the ends of the community in a unique fashion. One day set free from toil to rest and worship—this a patriot of any age may do well to guard.

Nehemiah further insisted that the Jews should not intermarry with members of foreign or mongrel peoples. Malachi has already showed us that in Jerusalem such intermarriages, along with the divorce of faithful Jewish wives, were common. Even in the restored city the spiritual leaders had difficulty in keeping the people true to Jehovah worship. In those days the only way of maintaining the Jewish race and the Jewish faith was by preserving the purity of the Jewish blood. The high banks which confine a river to its course save the river from death in the sands. The narrowness of Nehemiah's policy helped to keep the Jewish faith flowing deep and full down the centuries of change.

But we are especially grateful to Nehemiah for the inspiration he brings to us through his own personality. A very human man, vigorously asserting before God his undoubted virtues, yet he is God's man. He prays to the God of heaven, and sets his guards at the gate. He is one of God's servants, faithful, true, and bold.

"Nehemiah, why didn't you stay at the court of Persia? Don't you realize that many a man would cut off his right hand to get a position like yours? You have exchanged comfort and an easy job for misunderstanding, insult, terrible toil, sacrifice." The question and the questioner shrivel up in the presence of Nehemiah:

> "But thou would'st not *alone*
> Be saved, my father! *alone*
> Conquer and come to thy goal,
> Leaving the rest in the wild.
> We were weary, and we
> Fearful, and we in our march
> Fain to drop down and to die.
> Still thou turnedst, and still
> Beckonedst the trembler, and still
> Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself:
And, at the end of the day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand."
—Matthew Arnold, "Rugby Chapel."

Eighteenth Week, First Day.

4. Ezra, and the Reign of "Law"

The narrative of Ezra gives us, after the manner of the Chronicler, some conception of that movement of thought which finally hardened in legalistic Judaism with its sovereign aim, an absolute theocracy, or "rule of God." The record has it that Ezra read the law to the people, bound them to the sternest ritual observances, insisted strenuously upon their putting away of foreign wives. (One wonders whether Malachi would have condoned the cruelty involved in a procedure of this sort.) Ezra may be taken as the type of Jerusalem's religious leaders in the latter years of the fifth century.

To these years is usually attributed the final formulation of the so-called Priestly Code (see p. 8), with its laws new and old, with its apparent departures from the laws, not only of Deuteronomy, but of Ezekiel's time, with its minute interest in the details of the fasts and feasts, the ritual of the sanctuary.[4]

The teachings of Jesus and of all history have rightly made us suspicious of legalism. But the legalism of the days we are studying was made less dangerous because of its relation to the laity and to the synagogue.

[4] For laws included in the Priestly Code, see Driver, "Literature of the Old Testament," p. 150.

"The most characteristic feature of post-exilic Judaism is the rise of combinations of laymen for the study of the law. The synagogue appears by the side of the temple and becomes a more potent force than the official sanctuary in the development of the religious life of the people. Worship in the synagogues makes its start as an appendix to the study of the law and as a further means of spreading religious teachings."[5]

It is then a notable and encouraging fact that the enormous emphasis on legalism was the work not of priests but of laymen. The pious devotion of laymen to observances emphasized by laymen is not nearly so perilous as such devotion enforced by priestcraft. The synagogue whose study of ceremonial law was to breed Pharisaism was also to keep alive in the hearts of the common people the loves and purposes and hopes born of confidence in God.

The story has it that one summer the Italian reserves were entering upon their annual maneuvers, but in their civilian garb. The order to advance was given. One soldier moved forward, another backward, another wheeled to the right. Confusion and futility prevailed. The commander telegraphed for uniforms. The men donned the familiar costumes of the old days of military training. Again the order was given; and as one man the soldiers advanced across the field.

Law, ceremony, ritual are the uniform of the soldier of God. But the peril in Jerusalem (as in New York) was this: that the soldier might devote his thought to polishing buttons and pressing trousers, when the bugle was sounding the advance.

The reader of Morley's "Recollections" or of his "Life of Gladstone" is continually impressed by the various currents of thought that flowed through the life of England in the years of the nineteenth century. For example, in the same half century Newman could pass from Anglicanism to Romanism, while John Stuart Mill could pursue the problem whether there might be a good and weak God or a strong and

[5] Jastrow, "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," p. 300.

bad God. Darwin could write upon "The Origin of Species," only to bring down upon his head an avalanche of ecclesiastical criticism. Spurgeon could preach with amazing eloquence and conviction, while Matthew Arnold could write: "There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has realized itself in the supposed fact, and now the fact is failing it."

As one reads of "the night of legalism" in Judah, one is tempted to imagine that bigotry held absolute and unchallenged sway—that the night knew no stars, no flashes of heavenly light. This is far from true. Of course the life of Jerusalem in the Persian period was not that of England in the nineteenth century. But Zion has always been a city of quarrels rather than of peace. Not to mention the democratic influence of the synagogue, there were, shortly after Nehemiah's day, attacks upon the dominant practice and the dominant theology.

Eighteenth Week, Second Day.

5. Ruth, and the Revolt against the Tyranny of the Law

Read Ruth 1, for the pure loveliness of the story.

The book of Ruth is thought to date from the close of the fifth century, when the law against marriage with foreigners or any of mixed blood was in full swing. Without any apparent effort to teach a lesson or point a moral, it does both. As a story, the book is of singular beauty. One passes from the Priestly Code into this book and seems to leave a stuffy schoolroom, to catch the bracing air of the mountains, to win the freedom of the open fields.

A famine in Judah had impelled Elimelech and his family to settle in the neighboring "heathen" land of Moab across Jordan. The seeming necessity was a seeming mistake. In Moab Elimelech died; then his two sons died. Naomi the wife was left widowed, childless.

Plenty reigned again in Judah. It was natural for Naomi to wish to return to her old homestead. She bade her daughters-in-law go back to their own people. Orpah at last kissed the woman who had been a mother to her, kissed her and left her, to join herself as best she might to her people and their gods. Ruth stood by the Jordan. Behind her were the mountains of her homeland, bidding her to stay and not to go. Behind her lay the grave of her husband, pleading with her to stay. Behind her were the friends of her childhood: "Surely you will not leave us." Behind her were the temples of Chemosh, the god of Moab; and the religion of her country may well have woven itself into every habit, custom, and fiber of her life. Before her flowed the Jordan, and beyond the Jordan was exile—and the Jews who listened to the story knew what exile meant. Beyond the Jordan were certain poverty and sadness. Gleaning is not easy work. It is a heavy task to bring back the rewards of a long day's toil to an aged woman who waits in loneliness, a woman whose name, Naomi, *Pleasant,* she wishes to change to Mara, *Bitter.* Beyond the Jordan was certain ostracism. The women at the village well would all agree that she, the Moabitess, was responsible for the death of her husband. But Ruth chose, not the world of Moab, but the world of Judah. Why? "Well, she had taken shelter under the shadow of Jehovah's wings." But she could have worshiped Jehovah in Moab. Thousands of devout Jews were in exile. "Ah, but she loved Naomi." Orpah presumably loved Naomi, and left her. Ruth dared to choose her world because she heard the silent appeal of a friend's great need. She dared to choose the world in which the best in her was needed most. The best in her was her love, and she chose to lavish that love upon the life of her who needed most that precious gift.

Eighteenth Week, Third Day.

The story reveals an antiquarian interest in the old-time legal negotiations, by which the nearest kinsman of a deceased

man could transfer to another relative his own obligation to "raise up children" to his kinsman.

But of far more consequence is the fact that the story quietly calls the attention of every listener to the record that David, the king of the Golden Age, was himself descended from a Moabitess, a woman of a "heathen" country. "You who forever insist upon purity of blood, you who would tell us even to divorce the foreign wives we may have taken, you who will not welcome to your sanctuary any foreigner, and drive the devout Samaritan to another shrine on Gerizim, you who are always mulling over genealogical tables, have you ever looked up the genealogy of your own great king? Are you not hoping for the coming of David's greater son? Why hope for him? You would not give him right hearty welcome to your sanctuary, for must he not be the descendant of a foreigner?"

The attack upon the prevalent attitude toward aliens must have been more effective, because it was not a frontal, but a flank attack. Ruth is pictured as rich in all the charms and graces of Oriental womanhood. She is gentle, submissive, sacrificial, with a love as true as steel:

> And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.
>
> So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem.—Ruth 1:16-19a.

It was perfectly futile to protest against Ruth. Learned scribes might discuss at length the baneful influence of foreign marriages; but the glorious humanity of the avowal of devotion, the matchless beauty of the words and the deed, swept all hateful legalities far out into the sea of forgotten things.

The lawyers would go fishing for them some day, but only when they had forgotten for a time the woman and her story.

And probably they never did quite forget. It has been suggestively remarked that the Jewish Targum itself "expresses from time to time a certain freedom in tracing genealogies back to extra-Israelitish sources." Ruth is a book of protest, not so much against a law, as against the spirit of the law's enforcement. The law against foreign marriages was helpful; the spirit of its enforcement, that of pride and cruelty, was that which in the later days John the Baptist attacked, when he cried: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9).

Eighteenth Week, Fourth Day.

6. Job, the Revolt against the Old Theology, and the Challenge to Disinterested Loyalty

Read Job 1 and 2, the masterly prologue of the poem.

"The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. 18:18). With brazen assurance, the enemies of Jeremiah had cheered themselves with these words, as they concocted evil devices against the prophet.

Our studies thus far have led us to walk most of the time in the paths of priests and prophets. Not so easily classified, yet still constituting a fairly definite group, were "the Wise." These men sought to gather up the sacred truths of antiquity, the quintessence of the wisdom of the race. Disciples gathered about them and wrote down from time to time the words in which they crystallized their experience, observation, conviction. The Wise spoke not to the nation, but to the individual. They were always asking, "What is the way of wisdom for the man?" By the time of Jesus, these wise men had "degenerated into the scribes of Judaism."

Professor Royce makes this fine distinction:

"Many persons I know and honor too, men of cheerful souls and well-knit purposes, high-minded men and strenuous, to whom every ultimate, above all every philosophical, inquiry as to this matter of the meaning and final justification of life seems essentially vain and dangerous. Why we live, they say, and what our duty is, and why it is a worthy thing to do our duty, and how evil is to be explained, to ask this 'Why' is to hesitate, to dream, to speculate, to poison life. The best thing is to work and not inquire. Yet there is another way of viewing life. . . . It is the way of men who demand ultimate answers, and who, if they cannot get them, prefer doubt, even if doubt means despair."

When we study the Proverbs (p. 432ff.), we shall examine the work of men who seldom ask ultimate questions, who ask simply the question, "How?" "How shall a man of wisdom walk in this world of ours?" But among "the Wise" were men who asked not alone the question, "How?" but that other terrible, ultimate question, "Why?"

We have seen that to all Israelites before the Exile, disaster, whether in the realm of nature or of politics, was briefly explained as punishment for sin. Does the palmer-worm infest a man's garden? The man has sinned against Jehovah. Does Assyria sweep down upon Jehovah's country? Assyria is the club, the rod, of Jehovah's anger. The death of Josiah (p. 276) was a crushing blow to the God-fearing Hebrew. Habakkuk and Jeremiah both asked that insistent question, "Why?" but they got no complete answer. The Exile, with its bitter pain to women and little children, accentuated the difficulty of reconciling the suffering of the innocent with the righteousness of Jehovah; nor did Ezekiel satisfy the inquiring heart. We have seen how the problem of pain affected the people of Malachi's day. "Where is the God of justice?" "Everyone that doeth evil is righteous in the eyes of Jehovah."

The messages of the Servant of Jehovah, suffering and saving, were the noblest and most satisfying of all the answers to that question, "Why?" (p. 338ff.). We cannot be sure of the date of these prophecies. We know that they did not

win universal acceptance or appreciation. Usually both priest and prophet could only point to some past sin in explanation of pain, and to some future release in mitigation of pain; neither offered any solution that was adequate of the agonizing problem.

The date of the book of Job is uncertain. Some scholars place it before the Exile. Others hold, with good reason, that it may be dated c. 331 B. C. Others, with whom we may tentatively agree, hold that it comes from the last years of the fifth century. The book of Ruth attacked in a quiet, kindly, but decisive way the narrowness of those who made practical application of the Law; the book of Job fiercely attacked the old theology, which still persisted and ruled in Jerusalem's seats of the mighty.

For our study, the question of dates is of little consequence. The book is one of the timeless books of the world. The author has been called "The Great Unknown," but almost as well as if we knew his name we know this man with his throbbing heart, his eager questionings, his triumphant assertions, his utter despairs, his struggles to find foothold on the path to peace. He is our kinsman, our brother. It has been said of him, "He has written his poem with his heart's blood."

Eighteenth Week, Fifth Day.

Job, the hero of the poem, may have been an actual person known to hoary tradition as one who, though a man of perfect integrity, had fallen from great prosperity to great adversity; or he may have been simply a character of the common folklore. Ezekiel speaks of him as a typical righteous man, to be classed with Noah and with Daniel (Ezek. 14:14). Moulton describes the book as "a didactic poem, in dialogue form, with dramatic development."

The purpose of the book is not so much to explain suffering: it is rather to reveal the true attitude of the righteous in the experience of suffering. "In accomplishing this purpose, the writer proposes to undermine the orthodox position

that suffering is always the result of sin, and also to demonstrate the possibility of disinterested loyalty to God, particularly on the part of his hard-pressed fellow-countrymen."

The scene of the poem is laid in a land remote from the Holy Land, far away, therefore, from the sound of temple trumpets and the odor of temple incense.

a. *The Prologue* (Chapters 1 and 2).

The Prologue carries us swiftly from scene to scene. First we have a picture of perfect "piety and prosperity." The outward life of Job admirably harmonizes with his inner integrity. Then we witness the first heavenly council, in which Satan, or the adversary, appears not strictly as a bad angel, but as one determined that no one shall be accounted righteous until he has proved that he deserves his halo.

From heaven to earth we pass, to see one blow of outrageous fortune after another fall upon the head of Job, to leave unscathed his integrity. Then comes the second heavenly council. Of the transactions going on in heaven, Job is himself entirely ignorant. If only he could have known that his pain had some "cosmic significance," how bravely he would have borne it! How proud he would have been to be counted Jehovah's champion against the adversary! Phillips Brooks remarks, "The only consolation a brave man needs is explanation."

"The soul can split the sky in two
And let the face of God shine through."

For Job there are no opening skies, no angel visitants. But the Prologue introduces us to certain earthly visitors, three old friends of Job, who when they see him in his misery sit down with him for seven days and seven nights, and never speak a word—the wisest thing these wise men ever did.

In passing from the Prologue we note that it may suggest one explanation of the sorrow of the righteous. Such sorrow *has* "cosmic significance." Through such sorrow God is

achieving high ends, shaming adversaries, vindicating character, in a fashion not known to the sufferer himself.

b. *Job's Lament* (Chapter 3).

Why died I not from the womb?
Why did I not give up the ghost when my mother bare me?
Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should suck?
For now should I have lain down and been quiet;
I should have slept; then had I been at rest,
With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Who built up waste places for themselves;
Or with princes that had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver:
Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been,
As infants that never saw light.
There the wicked cease from troubling;
And there the weary are at rest,
There the prisoners are at ease together;
They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
The small and the great are there:
And the servant is free from his master.
Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
And life unto the bitter in soul;
Who long for death, but it cometh not,
And dig for it more than for hid treasures;
Who rejoice exceedingly,
And are glad, when they can find the grave?
—Job 3: 11-22.

The Lament is the cry of a bewildered man. Up to this time he has accepted the theology of his three friends, the theology of all his world. His suffering proclaims him a sinner. He does not deny that he has sinned, but he does insist that his suffering is entirely out of proportion to his sin. In anguish, he cries, "Why was I ever born? Why can't I die?" The man is in danger of forsaking the fear of the Almighty.

c. *The "Rounds of Speeches"* (Chapters 4 to 31).

There are three rounds of speeches. In each of the three

rounds, each of Job's friends has his chance to reason with him.[6] In each round, Job in his turn replies to his friends, or rather responds to the situation.

Eighteenth Week, Sixth Day.

For the three friends Job's problem does not exist. There is no such thing as the suffering of the righteous. Does Job suffer? He is a sinner. The case is closed.

In the first round of speeches (4 to 14) each friend in his own way dwells upon the fact that sin means suffering, but each pleads with Job to repent of his sin, that again he may walk in the light of Jehovah.

Eliphaz is the oldest and most dignified of the friends. Some of his words are of great charm and of absolute truth, but quite beside the mark.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth:
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.
For he maketh sore, and bindeth up;
He woundeth, and his hands make whole.
He will deliver thee in six troubles;
Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.
In famine he will redeem thee from death;
And in war from the power of the sword.
Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue;
Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.
At destruction and dearth thou shalt laugh;
Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field;
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.
And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace;
And thou shalt visit thy fold, and shalt miss nothing.
Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great,
And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
Like as a shock of grain cometh in in its season.
—Job 5: 17-26.

[6] Job 26: 5ff., 27: 7ff., and possibly 28, should be assigned to Bildad and Zophar.

A man has the cholera and the physician gives him a remedy for smallpox. Hear him: "According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow trouble, reap the same. But sin is common to the race. Mortal man has little chance to be just before his Maker. But as for me, I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause." "There is something pathetic," says a writer, "in the picture of a good man like Eliphaz, so earnest in his endeavor to help Job, so sure of his own position, and capable of putting such real truth into language of great beauty, and yet utterly unable to conceive of any truths beyond those which were contained in his own creed, and the formulæ in the use of which he had grown up."

Bildad has been called "the representative of Israel's wise men." The keynote of his speeches is this: "Inquire of the former age."

Doth God pervert justice?
Or doth the Almighty pervert righteousness?
If thy children have sinned against him,
And he hath delivered them into the hand of their transgression;
If thou wouldest seek diligently unto God,
And make thy supplication to the Almighty;
If thou wert pure and upright:
Surely now he would awake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.
And though thy beginning was small,
Yet thy latter end would greatly increase.
For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age,
And apply thyself to that which their fathers have searched out
(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing,
Because our days upon earth are a shadow);
Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee,
And utter words out of their heart?

—Job 8: 3-10.

"Job," he would say, "all history shows you that you can't fool God."

The hope of the godless man shall perish:
Whose confidence shall break in sunder,
And whose trust is a spider's web.—Job 8: 13, 14.

Job might just as well stop sinning forthwith. If he will, God will restore him.

He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter,
And thy lips with shouting.—Job 8: 21.

Zophar is the man of "common sense," the man of popular wisdom, a narrow bigot, a superb phrase-maker, utterly unmoved by Job's anguish, immensely exasperated by his heresies.

Canst thou by searching find out God?
Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?
It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?
Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? . . .
If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away,
And let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents.
Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;
Yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:
For thou shalt forget thy misery;
Thou shalt remember it as waters that are passed away.
—Job 11: 7, 8, 14-16.

Job is not impressed by the words of his self-constituted comforters and judges.

No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.—Job 12: 2.

"Doubtless," perhaps he says, "the axis of the earth passes through your bodies." "In the thought of him that is at ease, there is contempt for misfortune" (12: 5). Job could talk as well as his friends, knew all that they said, indeed had probably in times past used their arguments. But now he is broken—not because he suffers, but because he cannot suffer and at the same time hold his faith in God. Evil to sinners—that is just—but why this heartache, this agony to me?

d. *Job's Peaks of Thought.*

Out of the depths of his misery and despair, Job rises from time to time to certain heights of thought and vision—heights which, alas, he does not hold, from which he sinks back into the old misery and despair.

(1) He climbs his first height, when in 6:28 he says: "Surely I shall not lie to your face." "If you will point out my sins, I shall not try to evade the truth, but I will not say I have sinned when I have not." The man whose own theology has proclaimed him a sinner determines to be honest with men, whether God damns him or no.

(2) He climbs a further height as he rises to the conviction that God *ought* to forgive.

> If I have sinned, what do I unto thee, O thou watcher of men? . . .
> And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?—Job 7:20, 21.

God will search for him some day to grant him forgiveness, but then it will be too late. The man is *feeling* for the God who ought to be, dares to believe that after his death God will seek him to give him delayed mercy, yes, justice.

(3) In Chapter 9, we find Job at the lowest depth. His God now is simply wisdom and power, inaccessible *and* unethical.

> Behold, he seizeth the prey, who can hinder him?
> Who will say unto him, What doest thou? . . .
> I am perfect; I regard not myself;
> I despise my life.
> It is all one; therefore I say,
> He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.—Job 9:12, 21, 22.

Yet here again he rises victorious against God and man, and determines to be honest, not alone with man, but with God himself.

(4) In this same chapter, too (9:33), he makes another ascent, as he insists that there *ought* to be an umpire, a days-

man, between him and God: "There is no umpire betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Somewhere in the universe there is satisfaction for every need of man. On God's side are power and terror, on my side helpless fear. Is there no umpire?" So the man climbs again from the God who appears in providence to the God who ought to be, the God who alone can save His world from unreason.

Eighteenth Week, Seventh Day.

(5) In Chapter 10 Job faces, with morbid honesty, the seeming reasons for God's treatment of him. He canvasses all the possibilities, and concludes that God must have fashioned him as a precious vessel with infinite care, yet with the deliberate purpose to dash him to pieces at the end:

> Thy hands have framed me and fashioned me
> Together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.—Job 10:8.

But the very consideration of such hideous explanations is itself a new ascent of thought and vision, for a man as wise as Job cannot remain in this conclusion.

(6) In Chapter 13 Job has done with his friends.

> Surely I would speak to the Almighty,
> And I desire to reason with God.
> But ye are forgers of lies;
> Ye are all physicians of no value.
> Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace!
> And it would be your wisdom.
> Hear now my reasoning,
> And hearken to the pleadings of my lips.
> —Job 13:3-6.

> Will ye speak unrighteously for God,
> And talk deceitfully for him? . . .
> Is it good that he should search you out?
> Or as one deceiveth a man, will ye deceive him?—Job 13:7, 9.

Job is now brought to this extraordinary position: Hitherto he has been complaining of God and of God's injustice, while

his friends have been charging him with trying to fool God. Now he proceeds to defend God against the defenders of God. Their memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, their defenses are defenses of clay. He becomes, as one finely puts it, Jehovah's champion. Thus he climbs a lofty peak of thought, reaches the point where he is sure that character has value in the sight of God, and that the man who lies for God has no standing with him—the man who would "whitewash the moral order of the universe."

But shall the righteous man have a chance to stand before God? If so, when?

Read Job 14, with its infinite tragedy, and its transient dream of hope.

(7) In Chapter 14, we have one of the saddest dirges ever penned by the hand of man.

> There is hope of a tree,
> If it be cut down, that it will sprout again, . . .
> But man dieth, and is laid low:
> Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?—Job 14:7, 10.

But the thought of the revived stump of a tree brings to him a fascinating idea, too beautiful to be real. He plays with it as a child with a soap-bubble, as a man with a dream of paradise. Though God he is sure is going to pursue him relentlessly to the grave, yet He might, He might perhaps, lift him from the grave and tell him the meaning of his tears. That would certainly be great! He rises thus to a new peak of thought, if not of faith, and achieves the idea of vindication after death. If a man die, shall he live again?

> O that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol,
> That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
> That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
> If a man die, shall he live again?
> All the days of my warfare would I wait,
> Till my release should come.

Thou wouldest call, and I would answer thee:
Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thy hands.
—Job 14: 13-15.

But he sinks back into the old despair.

(8) In Chapter 16 Job believes that he will die, unjustly, a martyr whose blood, like Abel's, shall cry unto heaven, *where his witness is.* Here then he makes a new ascent. Already he has considered the thought of an umpire, an advocate in heaven. Now he knows he has one there.

Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,
And he that voucheth for me is on high.—Job 16: 19.

A writer quotes Tennyson's poem, "Despair," which gives the thoughts of a would-be suicide who, rescued from his death purpose, thinks on the mystery of the world:

"Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all—after all—the great God for aught that I know;
But the God of Love and of Hell together—they cannot be thought,
If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring him to nought!"

It would seem that for a time Job has been half unconsciously separating the God of providence, hard and cruel, from God as He is in his heart. But who is this witness in heaven? Who but God himself, the God behind the thick veil (16: 20, 21)? There is no escape from God but unto God. A man must think his God together, unify his God, or give him up. But Job falls back again into the night.

Nineteenth Week, First Day.

Read Job 19, with its light shining out of the bosom of darkness.

(9) In Chapter 19 Job is friendless, forsaken, persecuted by man and God. His utter aloneness wrings from him a cry, perhaps the most heart-breaking to be found in literature:

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends;
For the hand of God hath touched me.—Job 19:21.

But the theology of these friends has curdled the milk of human kindness. The horrible feature of their system was this, that when deity turned against a man they believed that all good men should join with deity in driving that man from the earth. The leper is the victim of God's displeasure. He must be excluded from the temple, not because he has a communicable disease, but because good men must cooperate with God in his verdict.

But now Job rises, as upon eagle's wings, to his loftiest ascent of faith and vision:

But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And at last he will stand up upon the earth:
And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed,
Then without my flesh shall I see God;
Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side,
And mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger.
—Job 19:25-27.

He beholds a living God, who will act as his Vindicator, his Kinsman-Redeemer, in whose presence after death he shall stand—not apparently to enjoy immortality—vindicated at last.[7]

Singularly enough the writer does not permit Job to stand long on this peak of the Delectable Mountains. His hero falls back again, more quiet, less enamored of his own grief, listening more intently for "the still sad music of humanity," practically hopeless.

In Chapter 24, Job enters a general indictment of God's regime, after which he turns upon his friends: "If it be not so now, who will prove me a liar?" (24:25). Of course if anyone should be able to prove him a liar in these words

[7] The probable interpretation, though Jastrow, "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," p. 235, note, speaks of "the famous passage, 19:25–27 . . . hopelessly corrupt through later contamination."

of his, none would be so happy as Job himself, for he thinks that he has disproved the thesis which has held his soul in life.

Nineteenth Week, Second Day.

e. *God's Wisdom vs. Man's Wisdom.*

Read all of Job 28, with its literary charm and religious suggestiveness.

But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
Man knoweth not the price thereof;
Neither is it found in the land of the living.
The deep saith, It is not in me;
And the sea saith, It is not with me.
It cannot be gotten for gold,
Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.
It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,
With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.
Gold and glass cannot equal it,
Neither shall it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.
No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal:
Yea, the price of wisdom is above rubies.
The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,
Neither shall it be valued with pure gold.
Whence then cometh wisdom?
And where is the place of understanding?
Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,
And kept close from the birds of the heavens.
Destruction and Death say,
We have heard a rumor thereof with our ears.
God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
And seeth under the whole heaven;
To make a weight for the wind:
Yea, he meteth out the waters by measure.
When he made a decree for the rain,
And a way for the lightning of the thunder;
Then did he see it, and declare it;
He established it, yea, and searched it out.
And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding.
—Job 28: 12-28.

The words of Chapter 28 certainly do not belong to Job himself. Many writers think they are a lyric interlude, or a later poem welded into the original poem to express a writer's thought that the problem of the book cannot be solved. Moulton and others would put the words into the lips of Zophar, and make them the final pronouncement of the three friends. "All the precious things of the world can be found out, but the wisdom of God, the underlying plan of the universe, cannot be found out, there is no price which man can pay to buy it. You, Job, have been asking, 'Why?' You haven't any business to ask that question, for an answer would involve the revelation of a wisdom hidden from all men; but there is a wisdom for *you*. Unto man he said, 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'" Thus would the three friends shut Job's mouth.

The words are glorious and true, in the main. But shall it be unlawful for a man to ask the question, "Why?" Then most strong men will become lawbreakers and take the consequences. Incidentally these three friends who don't want Job to ask, "Why?" are quite sure that they are the possessors of the correct and sufficing answer.

Nineteenth Week, Third Day.

In Chapter 31, Job takes an "Oath of Clearing," in which he calls down upon himself the most terrible curses if he has not attained to a standard of conduct and of thought which brings him near indeed to Jesus' kingdom of heaven.

If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,
Or lifted up myself when evil found him
(Yea, I have not suffered my mouth to sin
By asking his life with a curse);
If the men of my tent have not said,
Who can find one that hath not been filled with his meat?
(The sojourner hath not lodged in the street;
But I have opened my doors to the traveller);

If like Adam I have covered my transgressions,
By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom,
Because I feared the great multitude,
And the contempt of families terrified me,
So that I kept silence, and went not out of the door—
Oh that I had one to hear me!
(Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me)
And that I had the indictment which mine adversary hath written!
Surely I would carry it upon my shoulder;
I would bind it unto me as a crown:
I would declare unto him the number of my steps;
As a prince would I go near unto him.—Job 31:29-37.

If he could only learn Jehovah's indictment against him, he would wear it as a crown, knowing full well that his character would cry down the indictment.

f. *Elihu's Interposition* (32 to 37).

For God speaketh once,
Yea twice, though man regardeth it not.
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men,
In slumberings upon the bed;
Then he openeth the ears of men,
And sealeth their instruction,
That he may withdraw man from his purpose,
And hide pride from man;
He keepeth back his soul from the pit,
And his life from perishing by the sword.
He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
And with continual strife in his bones;
So that his life abhorreth bread,
And his soul dainty food.
His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen;
And his bones that were not seen stick out.
Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit,
And his life to the destroyers.
If there be with him an angel,
An interpreter, one among a thousand,
To show unto man what is right for him;
Then God is gracious unto him, and saith,
Deliver him from going down to the pit,
I have found a ransom.

His flesh shall be fresher than a child's;
He returneth to the days of his youth.
He prayeth unto God, and he is favorable unto him,
So that he seeth his face with joy:
And he restoreth unto man his righteousness.
He singeth before men, and saith,
I have sinned, and perverted that which was right,
And it profited me not:
He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit,
And my life shall behold the light.
—Job 33: 14-28.

The interposition of Elihu, the contribution of a later writer, need not largely concern us. It takes this young Sophomore of a theologian "a chapter and seven verses" to get well started; but he does succeed at last in making one real contribution to the solution of Job's problem. God is the supreme teacher (36: 22), who instructs by pain (33: 14-24). The great purpose of suffering is warning, discipline, education, if you will. The words have an element of truth. President Schurman has reminded us that by pain men have been driven from the use of a gastronomic to the use of an astronomic chronometer. The savage under his palm tree determines the time of day by the appeals of his stomach. Pain has disciplined, developed, educated men; but has not pain also beaten, broken, brutalized men? So far as Job is concerned, the words of Elihu again are quite beside the mark.

Nineteenth Week, Fourth Day.

g. *Jehovah's Intervention* (38 to 40: 14).

Read Job 39 to 40: 14, studying it as an achievement "of Hebrew genius in pure poetry," and observing its contribution to the argument.

Of this as literature, a writer says: "It is to this portion of the drama that the student must turn who would fain know the highest attainment of the Hebrew genius in pure poetry, such as Milton would have recognized as poetry."

Job has pleaded for an audience with God. At last God

gives him audience, and reveals to the astonished man the wonders of the natural world. The answer is to us at first disappointing. But the introduction of the wild creatures means this: "Look from your own darkness to the natural world, which is luminous with God, a God jubilantly sympathetic with all his creatures." In chapter 40 we have Jehovah's second speech out of the whirlwind, which brings out this impressive idea: "Job, you challenge the rectitude of the universe, pass judgment upon me. Very well then, if you propose to act as God, the judge of the world, assume the other functions of God as well." It is a daring thing for man to assume God's throne, and sit in judgment upon God. But the complete purpose of Jehovah's intervention seems to be to bring to Job: First, a revelation of God's power, wisdom, and eternal activity to subdue Job; second, a revelation of God's exaltation to rebuke Job's arrogant assumption of the rights of the godhead; third, a revelation of God's sympathetic interest and delight in the various creatures and creations of the natural world, which might lead Job "to forget his own little suffering in the category of life's experiences, sure that the soul of external nature is good, sympathetic";[8] so that Job might say at last:

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God, as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod,
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God."
—Sidney Lanier, "The Marshes of Glynn."

The poet would have his hero rest in the greatness and goodness of God, rise in the greatness and goodness of God, lay hold on the greatness and goodness of God.

We hear Job's final word: "I know that thou canst do all

[8] Interpretation due in part to W. T. Davison.

things"—but he had known that all the time. He goes further: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee" (42:2, 5).

Observe—he has seen no explanation of his suffering; he has passed beyond the need of explanation: he has seen God.

Nineteenth Week, Fifth Day.

With the light that Christ has shed upon our pathway, realizing that nature gives us "an ambiguous answer" to our questions, we probably would not have followed the reasoning of Job's three friends, nor yet that of the poet himself. We would probably spend some time in silent, helpful service to Job's physical misery. Then some day we should say to him:

First: There are many things I do not know, about which for the present we can and must maintain a reverent agnosticism.

Second: I do know that much suffering is due to personal sin. Such suffering offers no moral problem. It is good that sin and pain grow from the same stem. On the other hand, I know that much pain is not due to personal sin. If it were, then the world's greatest saints, heroes, martyrs, have been the greatest sinners.

Third: I know that much pain is protective, bidding us, "Stop, Look, Listen."

Fourth: I know that much pain is *necessary* vicarious pain, suffered because of others' sins; nor does this offer a desolating problem. There is no appeal to goodness comparable with this: If I sin, the inevitable pain will fall most surely not on me but upon those whom, in spite of my selfishness, I love. Further, I know that much pain is *voluntary* vicarious suffering. This pain offers no problem. Those who suffer thus are the glory of the world, the messengers of deity. In their faces we see "the face of the Eternal." The author of Job seems not to have known or been impressed by the great passage Isaiah 53. In one word, I know that pain is

a part of the price the world thus far pays for its joy, its progress in the material and in the spiritual spheres.

Granted a world in which pain must play its part, it is not good that Job should go scot-free. It is not good that righteousness and prosperity should always fall together. Then would men be tempted to be righteous for revenue only, then would we have a bargain-counter religion.

So we should go on to try to transfigure suffering into an instrument of redemption. And we should be encouraged by innumerable illustrations of sick men, sorrowing men, who have been masters of fate, saviours of men. "The pleasures of each generation," says Illingworth, "evaporate in air; it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world."

And then we should hasten on to Jesus. If ever one knew life, it was Jesus. If ever one knew God, it was Jesus. If ever there has been a revelation of God, it was in Jesus. And the follower of Jesus can say: "I am perfectly sure of God's love, even though I cannot understand his ways; and I am perfectly sure of that immortality of which Job scarcely dared to dream." It is Jesus who makes it possible for a man to say, without a pose:

"Of wounds and sore defeat,
I made my battle stay;
Winged sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear
I made my shouting spear;
Of loss and doubt and dread
And swift oncoming doom
I made a helmet for my head
And a floating plume."

The epilogue seems to us of the West a rather cheap ending to such a mighty poem. Like the prose prologue, it may have belonged to a Job tradition, which served as the frame for the picture. Yet even we of the West like to have our stories come out right, and the Orient well loved the external

marks of God's favor. And external marks of favor are not harmful when God's favor has been revealed to the yearning heart.

The poem is sad with the sadness inevitable to any clear thinking in the times before Christ. It is sublime in its presentation of a man who is lifted from his ash-heap and his anguish into God's world of power and joy, achievement and comradeship. As late as the days of Jesus, men assumed that those *must* have been sinners upon whom the tower of Siloam fell; they assumed that the blind man *must* be the victim of his own or his parents' sin. But the Christian centuries have listened to the poet's word, and have learned, though none too well, to stand in humble, reverent, studious silence before the problem of pain, leaving dogmatism to the past and the present friends of Job, hearing the words of Tennyson's Ancient Sage, who bids his friend to climb the Mount of Blessing,

> "Whence, if thou
> Look higher, then—perchance—thou mayest—beyond
> A hundred ever-rising mountain lines
> And past the range of Night and Shadow—see
> The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
> Strike on the Mount of Vision!"

"The pure in heart shall see God," and they can wait before life's fast-closed doors till God shall choose to open and make all things clear.

Nineteenth Week, Sixth Day.

7. Joel—The Religion of the Rent Heart and the Solemn Assembly

Read Joel 1 and 2, with the vivid description of locusts and drought, and the priestly appeal to the worship of the broken heart, and the temple.

Possibly in the days of the writers of Ruth and of Job, possibly about 333 B. C., the prophet Joel uttered his message.

The author of Ruth had attacked the prevalent remorseless insistence on purity of blood. The author of Job had attacked the popular and priestly theology. Joel finds within the accustomed channel of priestly thought and custom ample room for the flow of his own ideas.

The occasion of his prophecy was the approach of a frightful plague of locusts and an equally frightful drought. The individual locust has a head extraordinarily like that of a horse, and hosts of locusts sweep over the fields like war-horses, and darken the mountains with their numbers.

> For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number; his teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the jaw-teeth of a lioness. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white. . . . The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so do they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains do they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. At their presence the peoples are in anguish; all faces are waxed pale. They run like mighty men; they climb the wall like men of war; and they march every one on his ways, and they break not their ranks. Neither doth one thrust another; they march every one in his path; and they burst through the weapons, and break not off their course. They leap upon the city; they run upon the wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at the windows like a thief.—Joel 1:6, 7; 2:4-9.

In speaking of Argentina, after referring to the droughts, James Bryce says:

"The other danger is a plague of locusts. These horrible creatures come in swarms so vast as to be practically irresistible. Expedients may be used to destroy them while they are walking along the ground by digging trenches in their path, tumbling them in and burning them, but many survive these efforts, and when they get on the wing, nothing can be done to check their devastating flight. . . . Men talk of erecting a gigantic fence of zinc to stop the march of the creatures

southward from the Gran Chaco, for here, as in South Africa, they seem to come out of the wilderness."[9]

In the early days of the Great War, Palestine was visited by a similar plague. The Arabs were practically inert before the invasion of "God's Army," as they call the locusts. A writer says:

"Not only was every green leaf devoured, but the very bark was peeled from the trees, which stood out white and lifeless, like skeletons. The fields were stripped to the ground, and the old men of our villages, who had given their lives to cultivating these gardens and vineyards, came out of the synagogues where they had been praying and wailing, and looked on the ruin with dimmed eyes. Nothing was spared. The insects, in their fierce hunger, tried to engulf everything in their way. I have seen Arab babies, left by their mothers in the shade of some tree, whose faces had been devoured by the oncoming swarms of locusts before their screams had been heard."

In the prophet's day, because of the drought and the locusts, the meal offering and the drink offering which Joel counted as of extreme importance were withholden from the House of God. Well might priests gird themselves with sackcloth and lament; well might the ministers of the sanctuary lie all night in sackcloth (1:13). No prophet before the Exile would have spoken of the ritual in this way. Jehovah alone can help in the crisis. So priests and people, bride and bridegroom—all are summoned to join in prayers of intercession in the sanctuary.

> Yet even now, saith Jehovah, turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meal-offering and a drink-offering unto Jehovah your God?

[9] "Impressions of South America," p. 334.

> Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people, sanctify the assembly, assemble the old men, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.—Joel 2: 12-16.

But we hear again that veritable note of the prophet, which we heard in Malachi: "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (Joel 2: 13). Is the ceremony important? Yes, vastly important, but important only as the expression of the attitude of the heart.

A searching question was put recently to a public assembly: "If the men of the United States were suddenly and continuously to refuse to attend the social worship of the sanctuary, who would care to be President of the United States?"

As Joel continues the Ezekiel tradition in his emphasis on ritual *and* character, so, in a later prophecy, he follows Ezekiel in his conception of the Day of Jehovah. Down in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Jehovah judgeth) he sees the nations gathering themselves for battle against the people of Jehovah. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" But sudden destruction falls upon God's foes, while the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining (3: 12-15).

Nineteenth Week, Seventh Day.

Peter, in his second epistle, adopted or rather adapted a section of this prophecy, which speaks of the excitement and "ecstatic states and acts" of those who have a presentiment of the coming of the Day. Again we mark that singular change in the spirit of prophecy which we noted first in Nahum, and noticed as increasingly prominent in the later years: The day of Jehovah comes not to destroy the sinners in Zion, but to destroy the nations whose cruelties were breaking the heart of Israel. Again we observe the growing emphasis upon the spectacular and supernatural elements of the Day of Jehovah.

In "The Battle-Hymn of the Republic," we sing:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
'As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on.'

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat:
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on."

The author sees the coming of the Day of Jehovah. She sees the ruin of those who fight against her country. She knows that the Hero born of woman will crush the serpent with his heel. She sees, too, Jehovah sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat. But, taught rather by the earlier prophets and by her Lord, she sees Jehovah, not in the darkened sun or the withdrawn moon: she sees him in the watchfires of a hundred circling camps. She reads his fiery gospel not in quaking heavens and earth, but in burnished rows of steel. Joel is never forgetful of righteousness, but his view of the early, sudden, cataclysmic coming of the Day of Jehovah tends to weaken endeavor, to put out the watch-

fires of the human fighters for the freedom of the world, and to dull men's ears to the trumpet that shall never call retreat.

Some of the poetry of Joel is of exquisite beauty. He pursues bravely the well-beaten path of his priestly-prophetic predecessors. His God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness. God's summons is to the rending of hearts and to the solemn assembly. That message is not out of date.

Twentieth Week, First Day.

8. Jonah—The Bigot, and the Gospel of the Love of God,

"Broader than the Measure of Man's Mind"

Read Jonah 1, 2, and 4, and note the humor, the kindly irony, the unanswerable argument of the prophet.

We have seen that the priests and the scribes did not have their own way in Jerusalem. The voices of the earlier prophets were still vibrating in the hearts of many of the noblest of the people. Men could not forget that glorious description of Jehovah's appearance to the first liberator, leader, legislator of Israel: "And Jehovah passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6, 7). Men could not forget that word in Jeremiah, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jer. 18: 7, 8). Men could not forget the hopes of world service and world brotherhood which thrilled the unknown prophet. This magnanimity and this conviction of world mission blaze forth afresh in the book of Jonah. The author is supposed to have

written about 350 B. C., but his book is another of the timeless books of the world.

He puts his message into the form of a story or parable, descriptive of experiences attributed to a prophet of the period of Jeroboam II (see p. 200 and II Kings 14:25). The story is this: The prophet Jonah received a message from Jehovah to Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria. It was a message of doom. But, knowing well the compassion of Jehovah, Jonah was fearful lest Nineveh should repent upon his preaching, and therefore the hopes of hate which he had cherished might be thwarted. He went down to Joppa. There—quite providentially!—was a ship all ready to sail for Tarshish, which lies in a direction precisely opposite to that of Nineveh. "And Jonah paid the fare." No stowaway he; an honorable man! A storm arose.

> But Jehovah sent out a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god; and they cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it unto them. But Jonah was gone down into the innermost parts of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; what is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am a Hebrew; and I fear Jehovah, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea and the dry land.—Jonah 1:4-9.

While the "heathen" sailors prayed, God's man slept. The shipmaster must wake him, and, though a heathen, must instruct him to pray that the sea become calm. By lot, Jonah was pointed out as the cause of the ship's peril. In frightened haste the mariners questioned him: "What are you doing

on this ship? What is your business here?[10] What is your country? Of what people are you?"

Instantly the prophet's formal, familiar creed was upon his lips: "I am a Hebrew, and I fear Jehovah, who hath made the sea and the dry land." Curiously his deed belied his creed. The sailors might well have asked him, "How then do you think to flee from the presence of this all-creator?" They did not ask him. Generously they rowed, "dug hard," to get to land, did their best to worship and to appease the wrathful God of Jonah. The reader comes to like these heathen almost as much as he loathes Jonah. And the writer intended that he should. Jonah did have courage enough to request the sailors to throw him into the sea. After he had been three days in the belly of the great fish, and had had opportunity for self-contemplation, the prophet had another chance. Bedraggled as he was, he heard Jehovah speak to him a second time: "Go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach the preaching that I bid thee." This time Jonah preached; Nineveh repented; and from the king down to the humblest citizen the people believed God, and the very beasts of Nineveh were constrained to join in the season of fasting which marked the universal repentance.

> And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.
>
> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hasted to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Jehovah, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry? Then Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in

[10] Int. Com. Jonah, p. 36.

the shade, till he might see what would become of the city.—3 : 10-4 : 5.

A writer tells us that he once asked a devout member of one of the Eastern churches, why God had made so many Mohammedans. "Fierce and hot came back the answer, 'To fill up hell.'" Jonah had been quite sure that some such fate was the legitimate end of the heathen. He had no sympathy with the grace and mercy and abundant lovingkindness of his God. He "just knew" that God would repent him of the evil. Forgiveness and life for these Assyrians who have laid waste the world? Justice, death, is too good for them. "Forgive the debts of America—that's all right; but the debts of Germany? No, let her pay to the uttermost farthing. Forgiveness is not goodness; it is good nature!"

Twentieth Week, Second Day.

Jehovah had to take Jonah in hand once more. As the storm and the great fish had been his ministers, now a gourd (or castor-oil tree) was prepared for the prophet. This happily grew up in a night and sheltered Jonah from the heat. Like us who retire from the city to our suburban homes, Jonah under his booth and the shelter of his gourd watched to see what would become of the city. But Jehovah now ordered a worm to smite the gourd, and it withered. Then God ordered a sultry east wind, which beat upon the prophet's head. Like Elijah, though with worse reason, Jonah prayed for himself that he might die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." The mean little bigot had begun to take a human interest in this wild thing of nature, which had kindly sheltered him from the sultry wind; and now this wretched worm had destroyed the friendly living thing. God turned upon the bigot: "Ah, Jonah, you have had regard for this gourd, a thing for which you did not labor, which came up in a night and perished in a night, and should I not have regard for Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 little babies and also much cattle? Are you, a

man, to have compassion upon a poor plant, yet hate, and expect me to hate, the multitudes of a great city, whose people are heathen, oh, yes, but my children? Shall I, the Creator of all, the source of all the loves of earth, have compassion alone upon Israel, and condemnation for all the rest of the world?"

The author was not narrating history. To treat his message as a record of literal fact is to miss its meaning and value. It is futile to seek for instances in which great fish have held men for longer or shorter periods. Such investigations, should they meet with undeniable success, prove nothing of value and are utterly alien to the spirit of the story. The author, with quaint humor, tells how God ordered the great fish; tells us also how he ordered, ordered up: the great storm; the gourd of miraculous growth; the hot wind; and the deadly worm. To the writer, Nineveh and its ruler—never in history called the King of Nineveh—were in the remote past. He was not concerned to tell us how Jonah could speak with such swift and universal effectiveness to men of foreign speech and of superlative arrogance. Nor was he concerned to tell us what happened to his unheroic hero after his compulsory evangelism. He was concerned simply to bring to his people—and Israel is sometimes called dove, in the Hebrew, Jonah—a conviction of the sin of narrowness, bigotry. He would constrain them to believe in an evangel like that of Hosea but certainly universal, the evangel of the world-wide compassionate love of God. In the spirit of him who wrote of the suffering, saving Servant of Jehovah, he would call his people to world service, and world saviourhood.

The book of Jonah is in a sense the Old Testament parable of the Prodigal Son. The prophet Jonah is the unfeeling elder brother, who is indignant that the Father treats with forgiveness and compassion the son who has gone into the far country.

It is one of the ironies of history that we Gentiles for centuries have treated with contempt and cruelty the Jews,

who in the olden days were taught by God's prophet not to treat us with contempt and cruelty.

Twentieth Week, Third Day.

9. A Concluding Study of the Persian Period

(With the aid of undated prophecies, tentatively assigned to this period.)

Thus we have tried to trace some of the currents and cross-currents of thought flowing through the life of the Jews during the two centuries of the Persian Period.

a. *The Ritual.*

We have observed the increasing importance of ritual. The numberless and intricate details of the Law were diligently studied by groups and guilds of the laity, who came to be known as scribes. The studies of the synagogue enforced the observance of fasts and feasts, and particularly the law of the Sabbath. It is suggestive of the increasing devotion to the Sabbath that shortly after the close of the period under discussion, 321 B. C., Ptolemy I was able to capture the city of Jerusalem without any trouble because of the unanimous refusal of the Jews to fight on the Sabbath.[11]

The high priest gained more and more authority, until he practically assumed kingly functions within the Jewish community. Surrounding the high priest were various orders of ecclesiastics: priests, Levites, choruses of singers who employed in their worship many of the psalms found today in our Psalter.

The breach between Jerusalem and the Samaritans became a gulf fixed. On Mount Gerizim rose a temple, where the Samaritans nursed their devotion to the ancient Law and their hatred of their brother Jews.

The general observance of ritual was not regarded as peculiarly irksome. Multitudes there were who could hon-

[11] G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. II, p. 362.

estly use the Psalmist's words: "How love I thy law." In Isaiah 58 there is a beautiful illustration of the confidence of men in the spiritual efficacy of obedience to the law:[12]

> If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, and the holy of Jehovah honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.—Isa. 58: 13, 14.

Jean Kenyon Mackenzie tells us that she has known of "two old women of Africa who had a little wooden calendar of seven holes, with a peg to mark the passage of the days, and coming to the seventh day they rested in their houses. Other women might go to their gardens on that day; as for them they were religious." They knew no more of the religion of the white missionary than that, but their little knowledge was to them emancipating. They were set free from the intricacies of man-made taboo, and to the liberty of obedience to what they believed to be God's law.

And have we not all felt the liberating effect of obedience to a noble law, like that of the Sabbath?

b. *Righteousness.*

Notwithstanding the increasing emphasis upon ritual, law, we have noted a continuous emphasis upon character, justice. Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. Hands defiled with blood and fingers with iniquity, lips that have spoken lies, tongues that have muttered wickedness—sin has separated men from God (see Isa. 59: 1-3). "The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57: 20). Does prophetic thought glorify the external

[12] Isaiah 56 to 66 are assumed to belong to the Persian Period.

observance of the Sabbath? It speaks with the old-time conviction of the true fast:

> Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye fast not this day so as to make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to Jehovah? Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of Jehovah shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah will answer; thou shalt cry, and he will say, Here I am.—Isa. 58: 3-9.

Has the voice of true religion ever sounded more resonant and appealing?

"Life," says one, "will always be a strenuous and breathless game, playing tag among the teeth of Death." But the man who loses to another man the chance to win the game doesn't need to think he can bribe God by contributing to both sides of a duplex church envelope.

Twentieth Week, Fourth Day.

c. *Hostility toward the Gentiles.*

We have noticed an attitude of harshness and hatred toward foreigners. If these are not to be destroyed, they are to be enslaved.

> Thy gates also shall be open continually; they shall

not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and their kings led captive. For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. . . . And the sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.—Isa. 60: 11, 12, 14. *Cf.* 61: 5ff.

But the books of Ruth and of Jonah have taught us that side by side with intolerant men there were other men in Jerusalem, who lived in a world of universal comradeship and love.

d. *The Generous Welcome of the Gentiles.*

Mark such words as these:

Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides his own that are gathered.—Isa. 56: 6-8.

Have we, with our notorious condescension toward "inferior" races, with our contempt for men of other colors and races, even "glimpsed" the mountain peak of religion upon which stood the prophet who wrote those words?

Mark, too, another "unrelated and undated prophecy," presumably from this same period:

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians.

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed

be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.—Isa. 19: 23-25.

Assyria, land of blood and brutality, Egypt, land of subtlety and fraud—what has Israel to do with either of them? Israel has been the victim of both, ground by them as wheat between the upper and the nether millstones. But our prophet thinks of a highway along which Assyrian and Egyptian shall walk, each to the other's land, thinks of Israel as joining with them in glad, fraternal worship, with them blessed by the common God of all, Jehovah. Israel's ancient God, Jehovah, calls Egypt "my people," Assyria "the work of my hands." Israel herself has no desire now to be the slave-driver or the destroyer of the "heathen," is modestly proud to be counted a third with Egypt and Assyria. So the Christian Belgian might think of his future relations with Germany. So the Christian Korean might dream, as he does dream, of a day when China which has despised him and Japan which has denationalized him may join with him in a truly "holy triple alliance," in the worship and the work of his God, the God of the Jesus doctrine. Some men are optimists because they are somnambulists; some men "see life" and become pessimists. This prophet saw all and was not afraid, because he trusted God.

In the days which looked dark indeed to the lovers of Jehovah, there were men who saw the whole wide world held in the everlasting arms, and the whole earth full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (see Isa. 11: 9, Hab. 2: 14 *et al.*).

Twentieth Week, Fifth Day.

e. *The Happy City.*

In this connection, we have noticed a growing tendency to paint in fairest colors the City Beautiful that is to be.

It was said of an English preacher, "He had a great eye for the sunrise." The prophets of the Persian era, living in the midst of utter disillusionment, walked abroad, their faces radiant with the glory of the morrow. One is reminded of

the words of Browning's Pompilia, victim of all manner of shame and sorrow:

"And still, as the day wore, the trouble grew,
Whereby I guessed there would be born a star."

Now the picture is that of the transfigured temple: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine, and the box-tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Isa. 60:13). Again the inspired artists paint for us the common city life. The stern experiences of Jerusalem had offered little chance for the aged and for the little ones, but their blessed chance will come. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old" (Isa. 65:20). In that day, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24). In that day, violence shall end, injustice shall be no longer known; the people shall be all righteous, and poor little Jerusalem, with not even a plentiful water-supply in time of siege, shall have its own river—of peace. "But there Jehovah will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby" (Isa. 33:21). Nature herself shall lose her harshness. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree" (Isa. 55:13).

Pictures? Yes. Visions, rather, which thrill us with the hopes which make us men. A nation without longing, without hope, is lost. After the days of Deborah there were few woman poets in Israel. Two of our own most worthful hymns of patriotism have been written by women. We have already glanced at one of these, with its social hope. Listen to these words from the second:

"O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood,
From sea to shining sea."

Is that patriot dream a false and foolish dream? The visions of the patriot-prophets of Jerusalem have never found material embodiment.

"God's gift was that man should conceive of truth
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake,
As midway help till he reach fact indeed."

The visions which they cherished led them on to the more glorious fact that shall be. Through their dreams, if you will have it so, God was teaching his friends to look ever more and more beyond the emerald walls of the transfigured city, to the transfigured world in which the will of God shall be done as it is done in heaven.

Do you recall the words of Thoreau? "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be wasted. That is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." It was God who let down before the prophet's eyes the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, and then the vision of "the holy earth," and it has been the task of prophetic men and women ever since to build the foundations of loyalty and love. At last, the rising foundations shall meet the vision realized.

Twentieth Week, Sixth Day.

f. *The Coming King.*

In many of the "hope" passages usually assigned to our period, there is no mention of a heaven-appointed king. Rather, "Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king" (Isa. 33:22). But we have seen that Ezekiel thought of God's shepherdhood as mediated by his "servant David" (p. 344). In prophecies now found in Jer. 30 and 33 we have glimpses of the ruler of the people "who shall proceed from themselves, a Branch of righteousness to grow

up unto David." We observed that Haggai and Zechariah apparently thought of their leader Zerubbabel as a possible "Messiah," king or anointed one (p. 354ff.).

Read Isa. 9:1-7, 11:10, noting characteristics of the hoped-for king, and results of his reign.

In two wonderful passages, included in our present book of Isaiah (Isa. 9:1-7; 11:1-5), and almost certainly known if not written in our period, the coming king is characterized. (1) Those who have walked in darkness shall see a great light; joy shall rise out of sorrow, for the leaderless people shall at last have a ruler, who shall be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Godlike Hero, Ever-Watchful Father, Prince of Peace."[13] (2) Endowed with Jehovah's spirit, the heaven-designated king, a shoot out of the stump of Jesse, shall achieve with his word of truth and equity what other conquerors have wrought by the sword.

Again, in a prophecy bound up with that of Micah, we read of the Anointed One, of ancient pedigree, who comes from the old home of David and who feeds his flock in the strength of Jehovah and wins world-wide renown.

> But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth: then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.—Micah 5:2-4.

Would those who thus cherished the Messianic hope have recognized their Messiah in our Master? Would they have said, with Simeon, on seeing the infant Jesus, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in

[13] Translation by Kent.

peace"? Would they have seen in Jesus their comrade-saviour, the shepherd of his people, the peace-loving, peace-making king? Probably not. Down to the end of the Persian Period, the hope of the Messiah was usually political rather than religious. The king is to administer with Jehovah's justice and mercy the affairs of his people in his widening earthly empire.

Not because he fulfils detailed specific predictions, but because he fills full the dreams and hopes, the aspirations and ideals of kingly men who through the ages have longed for a king, do we think of Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. The disciples of Jesus were themselves compelled to have long experience with the spirit of Jesus, before the Revelator could speak of "Jesus Christ, who is . . . the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5).

Twentieth Week, Seventh Day.

As these streams of thought were flowing down through the life of the Jews, there were watchful eyes gazing out upon the world of politics. Now they saw Darius, as he created out of diverse tribes and peoples "the largest empire the ancient world had thus far seen."[14] They watched him as he dug again a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, as he made Persia "the first great sea power of Asia." Eager Jewish eyes scanned that great inscription, to this day "the most important historical document surviving in Asia," in which in three languages Darius attributes his success to his God, Ahuramazda, who helped him "because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a tyrant, neither I, nor any of my line. I have ruled according to righteousness."

Jewish eyes watched to see the meaning of the gradual decline of Persia, and of those endless marchings of troops along the maritime plain. Jewish hearts were wrung as Artaxerxes Ochus (c. 350 B. C.) sacked the temple; as his soldiers gave a boy for a harlot or sold a girl for wine (Joel

[14] Breasted, "Ancient Times," p. 182ff.

3:3, from section of prophecy apparently belonging to this period).

The men "about town" in Jerusalem would mark the increasing numbers of Greeks who now appeared as slave-traders buying up the children of Jerusalem (Joel 3:6), who now appeared as mercenary troops (Xenophon's "Anabasis"), or again, sought under the leadership of their orator Demosthenes to get subsidies from Persia. Shrewd Jewish merchants would be extending their enterprises by the use of the swift posts of the empire. They would hear that the Persians had introduced the common barnyard fowl into Europe from India;[15] and would bethink them of other Oriental commodities, commonplace or rare, which the vigorous young races of the Mediterranean might appreciate. All down the decades, skepticism was finding lodgment in the hearts of many men, and frequently with the skepticism superstition showed its toad-like head. Men there were who would sit among the graves, lodge in the vaults, eat swine's flesh and broth of abominable things; men who, after centuries of the teaching of monotheism, would still sacrifice in gardens and burn incense upon bricks to the gods or demons (Isa. 65:3-5, 7).

But all down the decades as well, men and women loved each other, reared their families in decency, worked hard to get a living from their vineyards and olive-yards, talked about the weather and the crops, lived bravely, went to the synagogue of a Sabbath, attended the feasts of the year, sang from the growing collection of "the Psalms of David," and were ever haunted by the great hope:

> And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will

[15] Breasted, "Ancient Times," p. 188.

> walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.—Isa. 2:2-4 (*cf.* Micah 4:1-3).

It has been said of us Americans that we are all prospecting for the Garden of Eden. Perhaps we caught the habit from the Jews; and perhaps we are more likely to discover the Garden than the man who sits on his own orchard wall and laughs at the prospectors as they pass.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Would you expect an ethical and religious *sag* to follow a great and idealistic enterprise, like the return to Jerusalem, or like America's participation in the Great War? Why or why not?

2. Did Zechariah have any grounds (aside from direct revelation) for believing that the Gentiles would ever turn to Jehovah?

3 Compare and contrast the religious conditions of Jerusalem in Malachi's day and in Haggai's day.

4. Would you be assured that abundant blessing would follow the loyal performance of the church service, and the obedience to the law of the tithes?

5. Was it wise, or otherwise, for the Jews of Ezra's day to divorce their foreign wives in the interest of purity of race?

6. Discuss the permanent value of the work of laymen, as illustrated by Nehemiah and the development of the synagogue.

7. State the problems and probable purposes of the books of Ruth, Jonah, Job.

8. Would you get much comfort in sorrow from the vision of the wild creatures of the world?

9. Would you regard public prayer as a means of combating locusts and drought?

10. Compare and contrast the ideal Coming King of the prophets with the Master whom we call our King.

11. A writer, K. Fullerton, has stated these to be the ideals of the prophets: social justice, the regenerate heart, the subduing power of sacrificial suffering, the peace of the world based upon righteousness. Do you personally discover these ideals in the prophecies studied in this and the preceding chapters?

CHAPTER XII

Voices of Judaism in the Greek Period

(332–168 B. C.)

Introductory

Twenty-first Week, First Day.

The Jewish people, with all their intellectual and spiritual assets, with all their aspirations for world conquest or world service, were a subject people throughout most of their national career. They had known the overlordship of three of the mightiest empires of the world, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia. They were now to find new masters in the West.

The age of Pericles had passed, but the glories of the Acropolis remained. Socrates had drunk the hemlock, but Plato had made his master minister to the world of thought. Euripides had dragged the ancient deities of Greece from their thrones in the minds of thoughtful men. Thucydides, "the first scientific writer of history," had completed his work. Greek culture, with its art and architecture, its music, its philosophy, its science, fascinated Philip of Macedon. The great soldier mastered Greece, but humbly served her. He heard the call to the conquest of Persia, but "was stabbed by conspirators during the revelries at the wedding of his daughter, 336 B. C." Alexander, a lad of twenty, came to the throne. "The passage of the Granicus rendered Alexander master of the Greek colonies, the battles of Issus (333 B. C.) gave him Tyre and Egypt, the battle of Arbela (331 B. C.) gave him the whole earth."[1] Alexander while in Egypt entered the

[1] Montesquieu, quoted by G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," vol. II, p. 372.

ancient temple of Amon, and came forth from that temple a god, a son of Zeus-Amon.[2]

As a god he demanded the obeisance of his old-time comrades, and the recognition of his deity by his subject states. He proved a better statesman than god. While adopting many Oriental customs, he introduced into Asia the coinage and commercial methods of Greece and the artistic, scientific, and philosophic zeal of Athens, the mother of culture. The spirit of Greece entered Asia with the conqueror, the spirit of intellectual freedom, the spirit of eager inquiry, the spirit of love for the present life.

"How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!"

Alexander the Great, the soldier, the statesman, the god, died in 323 B. C., "probably in a drunken debauch." His conquests had carried him as far as India, his influence spread even farther. His thirteen years of rule transformed western Asia and the whole Mediterranean world. Greek cities sprang up everywhere, some almost within sight of Jerusalem —cities with their temples, their libraries, their theaters, gymnasia, and racetracks. Greek became the language of government and of commerce. Old things passed away; behold, they became new.

Ptolemy I, a capable commander in Alexander's army, became lord of Egypt; in 321 B. C. he is said to have carried some thousands of Jews into an easy exile. From that time on till 198 B. C., Jerusalem was usually under the rule of the Ptolemies.

In the olden times, exile had been as the grave to the religious Jew. In the Greek period, important Jewish colonies were found in all great cities. Skilful in business and politics, the Jews rapidly rose to places of prominence in the lands of their voluntary or involuntary exile. They learned the Greek

[2] Breasted, "Ancient Times," p. 439ff.

language and the Greek fashions of thought. They still remembered their mother, dear Jerusalem, they still prayed with windows opened toward Jerusalem, still sent their gifts to the temple of the holy city, and they died with their last thoughts of Jerusalem. They would have understood the word of Rupert Brooke:

> "If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England."

Many of these Jews of "the Diaspora," or the Dispersion, sought to harmonize their faith with the philosophy of Greece. By 250 B. C., the Law had been translated into the Greek. The ethical purity and lofty monotheism of the Jewish faith profoundly influenced many Gentile minds. During the greater part of the Greek period, Jerusalem was "a compact and prosperous" city. The territory which it dominated "was not thirty miles north and south, and little more than twenty east and west." With every pilgrim coming from the outer world came new thoughts, news of strange disorganizing philosophies, news, too, of a "free and exhilarating" life, remote from the rather somber world of Jewish thought.

The temple was still the center of the life of Jerusalem, and religion was the chief interest of the city. Hecateus, the first Greek "to have any real information about Jerusalem," writes, near the year 300 B. C.:

> "The Jews have never had a king, but committed the presidency of the people throughout to that one of the priests who was reputed to excel in wisdom and virtue; him they call Chief Priest, and consider to be the messenger to them of the commands of God."[8]

In our present chapter we shall have occasion to mark again some of the emphases of prophecy, which were to persist through the centuries down to the birth of Christ. We shall glance at the book of Esther, with its message of courage and unconquerable nationalism. We shall then trace two in-

[8] G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," vol. I, p. 389.

teresting lines of thought pursued by "the Wise"; and shall stop for a moment to hear the music of the Song of Songs.

Twenty-first Week, Second Day.

1. Voices of Prophecy

a. *The Coming King.*

The new era did not kill the old hopes. In Zech. 9 we have an undated prophecy, which may belong to the days when Alexander, after beating the Persians at Issus, was making his swift progress toward Egypt. The collapse of old empires and the rise of new empires had always stirred to vivid flame the spirit of prophecy; and we see it now again burning brightly:

> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.—Zech. 9:9, 10.

The prophecy recalls earlier descriptions of the Messianic King and of the Servant of Jehovah as well. He is "vindicated" and the recipient of salvation; he is peace-loving and lowly. His wide reign shall mean peace to the nations. What new and wondrous meaning we now read into the old message as we think of Jesus, at once the Sovereign and the Servant, who wins his right to world sovereignty by his world service, who uses the mightiest of all weapons, grace and truth, who speaks peace to the nations.

b. *The Triumph of Ritual Holiness.*

Sometimes the prophetic hope looked forward to the triumph of ritual holiness in the world.

In a passage written possibly quite late in the Greek period, we have these words:

> And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO JEHOVAH; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.—Zech. 14: 16-21.

To the writer the fairest vision of the future, his Utopia, is a city to which the remnant of the nations shall come to worship the king, Jehovah, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles; a city so completely holy that the common pots shall be entirely suitable for the use of the vast multitudes of devotees; a city in which the very horses of the pilgrims, hitherto abhorred as the symbols of pomp and war, shall be dedicated to Jehovah, their tinkling ornaments inscribed, "Holy unto Jehovah." A strange and external conception of the Golden Year! And yet, consider: "Civilization to the Jew was not progress except in so far as it was theocentric (God-centered) civilization." It was almost impossible for a Jerusalemite to separate the thought of a God-centered civilization from the thought of a temple-centered civilization. The day would come when a man could write about "a city without a church"—"I saw no temple therein: for the Lord

God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof"—but the man who wrote that had known "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and was himself deeply indebted to the great churchman, Ezekiel.

Twenty-first Week, Third Day.

c. *The Doom of the Gentiles.*

Did the old intolerant attitude toward other nations persist in the new atmosphere of Greek thought? Yes. In Zech. 14 we have, as in earlier prophets, the heathen nations gathering to war against the holy city, and now the city itself is taken, the houses rifled, and half the city carried into captivity. Then the prophet sees Jehovah himself come forth to fight against the nations, and to save his people. Then at last shall Jehovah indeed be king over all the earth (14: 1-9). The words do not sound very much like the words of Jesus: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But harsh and vindictive as they seem, the words have in them a ring of victorious trust in Jehovah the king of all the earth, which makes us forget their bitterness. And we may well ask this question: How could the little territory of Judah, with its area of twenty by thirty miles, with its handful of people, save itself to its ultimate world mission, save itself from the full sweep of the sea of Greek culture, Greek worldliness, Greek "heathenism"? President Wilson has said: "We do not want anything for ourselves that we do not want for every other nation of the world." There speaks the voice of a great, free, powerful people. Voices speaking of world comradeship and world mission were heard in Jerusalem, but the customary insistence on Jewish ceremony, the fierceness of Jewish intolerance, were as the dikes of tiny Holland holding back the tides of the Atlantic. And if there were few voices of wider love to be heard in Judaism, it is certain that there were fewer still in the Gentile world. Christ had to come before a Gentile could write of a bigot, words like these:

"He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win;
We drew a circle that took him in."

2. Esther, the Voice of Jewish Nationalism

Read Esther 1, 4, 6, and 9, noting the remarkable portrayal of the characters of the story and the evidences of intense and intolerant nationalism. Consider the contrasted influences playing upon Jewish minds familiar with the books of Jonah and Esther.

Passing from these emphases of prophecy, we study the book of Esther, which belongs apparently to the Greek period, and further illustrates the intolerance which characterized one wing of the later Judaism. The intolerance of Esther is not aggressively religious, as in the case of the prophets. It is primarily nationalistic.

The purpose of the story is to forward the observance of the late, but highly regarded, festival of Purim, for which there was no authority in scriptural legislation.[4]

The story breathes a joy in wholesale carnage, a triumph in the destruction of destroyers and the exceptionless application of the law of retaliation, which are far from the spirit of Jesus, and almost as far from the spirit of the great words of Jonah and of the universalistic prophecies.

> On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the

[4] The word *pur* is said to mean *lot*, and the explanation of the feast is that it commemorates the casting of the lot by the wicked Haman to discover the favorable day for the presentation or the execution of his plan to kill all the Jews. "The feast is an annual merry-making of a wholly secular character." To this day the feast is observed, in part, by the reading of Esther, and by the heaping of curses upon the heads of Haman and his more modern representatives. "Purim is a Persian spring festival, marked by ceremonies symbolical of the reappearance of the sun of springtide, which was adopted by the Jews. . . . The chief characters in the book of Esther, Mordecai and Esther, are purely fictitious, the names being adaptations of the Babylonian deities, Marduk and Ishtar."—Jastrow, "Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions," p. 161.

> palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done. Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews that are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. And the king commanded it so to be done: and a decree was given out in Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. And the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men in Shushan; but on the spoil they laid not their hand. And the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of them that hated them seventy and five thousand; but on the spoil they laid not their hand.—Esther 9: 11-16.

The book does not mention the name of God, and the vengeance wreaked upon the enemies of the Jews is wrought entirely by the hands of men. The prophets always hear, above the noise of earthly foes and avengers, the solemn march of God and the solemn word of God, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

In estimating the book of Esther, we must recall the consummate brutality of the relations between political groups in the period of our study. Thus, a little more than a century perhaps before the book of Esther was written, these same cultured Greeks of whom we have spoken—the Athenians—sought to enslave the inhabitants of the island of Melos, and used this argument: "The powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must." The Meleans refused to own the lordship of the Athenians. "'The Athenians,' Thucydides quietly says, 'thereupon put to death all who were of military age and made slaves of the women and children. They then colonized the island, sending thither five hundred settlers of their own.'" William James, from whom we have quoted, adds: "Alexander's career was piracy pure and simple, nothing but an orgy of power and plunder, made romantic by

the character of the hero. . . . The cruelty of those times is incredible." We are not to marvel at the vengefulness of Esther. The marvel is the magnanimity of the spirit which dwelt in the great prophets. It happens that our book found its way only with difficulty into the Canon.

Vashti, the modest queen, is perhaps the finest character in the story. The youthful Esther, who holds her happiness and her life of no account as dear unto herself, if she can save her people, is a picture very finely drawn.

> Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.—Esther 4: 13-17.

The sagacity, the silent courage, the quick audacity of Mordecai appeal strongly to the imagination. The book is particularly helpful as affording us a picture of the fiery heart of Jewish nationalism in the third century before Christ. It is even more helpful as revealing the nation's need of Jesus, and suggesting the difference Christ has made, or may make, in the thoughts of men toward their brother-men.

In working over our material, we hear again and again the words of Jesus, and apprehend more clearly their meaning: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not" (Matt. 13: 16, 17).

3. "Ecclesiastes," the Voice of Weary Skepticism

Twenty-first Week, Fourth Day.

A writer has said: "The spirit of skepticism was of far more serious moment than the ritual which came in with the post-exilic age."

In some hearts, as we have seen, faith nourished hope—now hope of the coming king, now hope of the triumph of ritual and the temple, now hope of the destruction of all enemies. In other hearts doubt was the mother of melancholy, if not despair. The book of Ecclesiastes is the voice of one such heart.

Read Eccl. 1 and 2. After you have read these chapters, you can't stop reading until you have finished the book. Observe what helpful discoveries the writer makes, as he walks around in his prison of a world.

"Job," says one, "is an untamed eagle, dashing himself against the bars of his cage. The 'preacher' looks out with lusterless eyes on the glorious heavens, where, if he were free, he might soar." The book had a hard time to get into the Canon. At the Synod of Jamnia (p. 5), we know that the doctors disagreed upon its canonicity. Probably the great name of Solomon alone saved to us the book. There are numerous evidences that editors have toned down the skepticism of the author.

Two schools of thought are believed to have made their characteristic additions to the original work:

First, the Hokma or Wisdom School, who introduced into the book their proverbs, which sometimes do not clinch but neutralize the argument.

Second, The Pharisaic (Chasid) School, who sought to make the very heterodox author as orthodox as possible.

a. *The Author.*

The author is unknown. He writes under the name of

Solomon, the typical "wise man" of Israel. He uses a late form of Hebrew, and takes an attitude toward rulers, tyrants, utterly inconceivable in Solomon. He "wears his mask easily," and every now and then "the mask slips." Probably in the earlier part of the Greek period, about 300 B. C., the man lived and wrote.

While his name is unknown to us, it is not hard to paint his picture. The stamp of old age is upon many of his words. Though not himself poor, he shares in thought the lot of the hungry. He feels bitterly the oppression of petty rulers. He is unhappy in the memories and experiences of his home. He knows no good woman, to whom he may go for spiritual refuge. The man does not deny God, and yet, though a neighbor to the temple and its thought, God is to him "little more than the course of nature, irresistible, inscrutable, not to be loved."

> "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all your Piety and Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

Like the man himself, his God has no use for fools, who indulge in the mummeries of the temple, in multitudes of words, in dreams of uncertain meaning.

> Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they know not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh with a multitude of business, and a fool's voice with a multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.—Eccl. 5: 1-5.

The writer knows not, or believes not in, the redemptive

value of suffering. He is like a man in a little oasis, with water and dates enough for immediate use, who sees the desert slowly drifting in upon him and, feeling sure that as the desert conquers death will conquer too, therefore determines to make the most of the present.

> Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; yea, God hath made the one side by side with the other, to the end that man should not find out anything that shall be after him.—Eccl. 7: 13, 14.

b. *Life's Liabilities.*

The writer makes several surveys of life. He is impressed by the thought that neither in humanity nor in nature is there any progress. And yet there is an insatiable hunger of eye and ear. He experiments with pleasure to the limit, and concludes that this is vanity, emptiness, breath. In chapter after chapter he assesses life, notes the helplessness of men within this closed circle of a world, notes man's inhumanity to man, decides that there is no reason for accepting the new-fangled notion that while beasts perish man has eternity.

> I said in my heart, It is because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are but as beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no preeminence above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?—Eccl. 3: 18-21.

The "preacher," as he peruses his Genesis, gets no such honey from the rock as did Longfellow, when he wrote,

> "Dust thou art, to dust returnest
> Was not spoken of the soul."

The argument of Emerson would have had no weight with him:

"What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent:
Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again."

Not for him the thought that comforted Tennyson:

"Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just."

Twenty-first Week, Fifth Day.

He concludes that all labor and skilful work issue out of the cruel competition of man with man (4:4, margin). Oppression, injustice, are to be expected.

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent taking away of justice and righteousness in a province, marvel not at the matter: for one higher than the high regardeth; and there are higher than they" (5:8). There are policemen, sergeants, captains, inspectors, wardmen, aldermen, mayors, governors, satraps, princes—grafters all.

Mary Antin, speaking of her experience in Russia, says:

"You as a little girl heard a great deal about the chief of police, and excise officers, and other officers of the Czar. Between the Czar whom you have never seen, and the policemen whom you knew too well, you pictured to yourself a long row of officials of all sorts, all with their palms stretched out to receive your father's money. You knew your father hated them all, but you saw him smile and bend as he filled those greedy palms."

May that world of the Czar never return! Into this kind of world Ecclesiastes looks.

Nor does he see any use in patriotic endeavor. Mazzini's word would have had no meaning for him:

"Say to men, 'Come and suffer; you will hunger and thirst, you will perhaps be deceived, be betrayed, be cursed, but you have a great duty to perform.' They will be deaf perhaps for a long time to the voice of virtue, but on the day that they do come to you, they will come as heroes, and be invincible."

Ecclesiastes is no forerunner of the prophet of United Italy.

One would imagine that a man who has reached this pass would court death or commit suicide. But it is the suppression, rather than the expression, of pessimism which leads to suicide. Indeed, as he assesses life the "preacher" finds some profit, "surplusage."

c. *Life's Assets.*

In one passage he asserts that the day of death is better than the day of birth; but he modestly claims that a living dog is better than a dead lion; the reason is simply that the living knows that he is going to die, and this is a great deal better than to know nothing, the fate of the dead.

So, too, he concludes that wisdom excels folly as far as light excels darkness; but the main reason is this, that the wise man's eyes are in his head, and with those "unbandaged eyes" he can see whither he is going—to the dead.

Further, he discovers that work is good, food is good, domestic love—if attainable—is good.

> Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let not thy head lack oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy life of vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all thy days of vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labor wherein thou laborest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for

there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest.—Eccl. 9:7-10.

It sounds strangely like Omar:

"A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the waste,
And Lo, the phantom Caravan has reached
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste!"

One is to work with his might, why? Because "work done for God, it dieth not"? No; but work is one's portion, and there will be no chance to work in Sheol.

Friendship, too, is good.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. . . . And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.—4:9-12.

Twenty-first Week, Sixth Day.

d. *Concluding Counsel.*

After listening to certain bits of prudential advice, we enter upon the last essay, which bids us "to make the most of youth, and of life's prime, for age and death take all away." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes" (11:9).

The "orthodox" reviser wisely interrupts his thought, to remind the young man that God will put his appraisal upon the way he has lived. He interrupts again, and to more glorious purpose, at the beginning of Chapter 12, with the words: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The last advice of the original author was apparently this: "Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity" (quickly flee) (11:10).

> Before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain; in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows shall be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the street; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors shall be in the way; and the almond-tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets: before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity.—Eccl. 12: 1b-8.

So the sorrowful man, with those unbandaged eyes of his, looks down the long gray path to old age, when the arms and legs grow weak, the teeth fall out, the eyes grow dim; sees at last the mourners go about the street; and bids men "seize the day." Even at the last there is no suggestion of immortality. The dust returns to the earth, and "God undoes his creative work." At the first God gave to man the breath or spirit of life. Now at death he takes it away. It is not strange that the "Preacher" ends upon the same note which he struck at the beginning: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Accept his presuppositions—the writer has proved his thesis.

Twenty-first Week, Seventh Day.

Some commentators, assuming that the book has received no revisions, hear in Ecclesiastes two voices, one of skepticism, the other of faith. But the voice of faith interrupts, very worthily, the voice of the persistently skeptical author. His own message to our time is this: Grant that life is a closed

circle, grant that the crooked cannot be made straight, yet it is worth while for a man to work hard, to cherish the wife of his youth, to keep a stiff upper lip, to enjoy the real though fleeting goods of life, to look with kindly if hopeless sympathy upon other men, and to look up to God with sincere though wordless reverence. Ecclesiastes has no message for the dying hero, or the lifelong invalid. He could not plead with a man as did the poet:

> "Small the pipe, but Oh, do thou
> Peak-faced and suffering piper blow therein
> The dirge of heroes dead, and to these sick,
> These dying, sound the triumph over death."

He has no message but one of despairing submission for the victims of the world's greed and cruelty, the victims of life's handicaps. He misses what Jesus taught the world: the conviction that there is a loving Father God, and the resulting convictions of social progress, the infinite worth of the individual, the spiritual fruits of sacrifice, immortality.

But the book is worthy of prolonged study. A man appreciates his country more, when he has met a man without a country. He appreciates more the riches of love in Christ Jesus, after he has met a man who never heard or dreamed of Christ.

A writer quotes the words of Fitz-James Stephen:

"We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we take the wrong road, we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not know certainly whether there is any right one. What must we do? Be strong and of a good courage. Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes. If death ends all, we cannot meet death better."

Brave words, which in a tired fashion Ecclesiastes would have endorsed. But the "Preacher's" best was by no means our best. Indeed, even while the man was standing on his mountain pass, in the midst of whirling snow and blinding

mist, there were men in his own city, who lived in the radiant sunlight of a service which was perfect liberty, men who could make their own, with an emphasis upon the first personal pronoun, the words of the prophet:

> The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified.—Isaiah 61: 1-3.

4. The Chronicles—Judah's Story—a Sermon

It is possible that about Ecclesiastes, "the Caller of Assemblies," there gathered a group of men who shared his heterodox views of life. But in Jerusalem there was another man or school of men who found no such difficulty as afflicted Job or Ecclesiastes in vindicating the general goodness of the world, or in vindicating the ways of God with men.

After reading the book of Job with its fierce indictment of God's rule, one is tempted to think that the book of Chronicles must have been written as a counter-offensive, launched to crush Job's attack. First and Second Chronicles were probably completed in the early Greek period. As we have seen (p. 304), they look back upon the history of Judah to find there the one invariable law: Personal and communal righteousness means prosperity, personal and communal sin means ruin. No doubts assail the Chronicler, no remediless world-pain afflicts him. His message probably did little to silence or to convert men of the temper of Job or of Ecclesiastes. It brought to the faint-hearted and the faithful, the quiet and afflicted people, strong encouragement to fight the good fight of faith.

Twenty-second Week, First Day.

5. Proverbs—Voices of the Believing Wise

Read Prov. 4, 8, and 9—passages from the noble Wisdom Sonnet.

A writer speaking of our own times says:

> "A thousand creeds and battle cries,
> A thousand warring social schemes,
> A thousand new moralities,
> And twenty thousand, thousand dreams."

A Jerusalem poet of the Greek period might have sung a similar song of his time and city. It was a wholesome thing for the young men of Jerusalem, and a happy providence for us, that there had grown up through the centuries a school of wise men, who did not care very much for the new creeds and cries, and schemes and dreams, but did care a great deal for the old morality, based on the quiet old-time trust in God.

To these wise men we owe the book of Proverbs, which probably received its present form about the middle of the third century B. C.

As we attribute every particularly witty story to Lincoln, so the Jews were accustomed to bring all their wise saws and sayings under the literary protection of the great name of Solomon.

Moulton distinguishes four types of Proverbs: First, the unit proverb, a couplet, rarely a triplet, in which the thought is bounded by its own horizon; second, the proverb cluster, in which "independent sayings are gathered about a common theme"; third, the epigram, a unit proverb organically expanded, the original saying being elaborated into a longer verse; and fourth, the wisdom sonnet, in which the thought is molded to special form.

a. *The Praise of Wisdom.*

The first nine chapters are devoted to the praise of Wisdom.

Mark the social background of the chapters. Robber bands are at work, which make a real appeal to average young men for cooperation. Men of violence are common, men who wink with the eye, shuffle with the feet, make signs with the fingers, become the envy of young men, as in the days of Dickens's "Fagin" and "the Artful Dodger." Licentiousness is prevalent. The sage is seeking to make young men fall in love—with Wisdom. Wisdom, infinitely precious, is regarded as practically synonymous with discretion, knowledge, understanding, prudence, uprightness, and is contrasted with simplicity, scorning, folly, wickedness. Wisdom has been defined as "moral and religious intelligence, or the knowledge of right living."

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver,
And the profit thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies:
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be
compared unto her.
Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:
And happy is every one that retaineth her.
Jehovah by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding he established the heavens.
By his knowledge the depths were broken up,
And the skies drop down the dew.
My son, let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep sound wisdom and discretion:
So shall they be life unto thy soul,
And grace to thy neck.
Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely,
And thy foot shall not stumble.
When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid:
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.
—Prov. 3: 13-24.

Possibly the quintessence of the teaching of this Wisdom

might be expressed in the words which served as one of the mottoes of David Livingstone:

> In all thy ways acknowledge him,
> And he will direct thy paths.—Prov. 3:6.

How then is one to get this infinitely precious Wisdom? The words quoted help us to the answer: Jehovah is the fountain-head of Wisdom.

> Jehovah giveth wisdom,
> Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.—Prov. 2:6.

And the method of gaining Wisdom from the Source is reverence, the fear of Jehovah. Professor Fairbairn remarks: "It is within my recollection no unusual thing to see as members of the same session, and all duly ordained elders charged with the spiritual oversight of the congregation, the laird, the schoolmaster, the doctor, the farmer, the farm-servant, or the shepherd; and of these I have known the last to be the man of finest character, of most wisdom in counsel, and of greatest spiritual weight in the congregation or parish." A man said of his son, whom he had put through college at great expense: "I poured in this gold, and it came out this calf." The reverent, unlearned shepherd drinks at the Source of Wisdom while the self-complacent snob saunters toward a mirage, and in his age perishes of thirst. The wise man pleads:

> Keep thy heart above all that thou guardest; (margin)
> For out of it are the issues of life.—Prov. 4:23.

Here we are in a kingdom of thought in which Jesus has made his followers citizens (Matt. 15:18-20).

Twenty-second Week, Second Day.

In Chapter 5 we have a searching arraignment of the immoral woman, and a keen analysis of the effects of immorality *upon the man:* First, a man's honor given to another; second,

a man's enslavement to the cruel; third, sorrow and remorse; fourth, loathsome disease.

Here, as elsewhere, the writer in his discussion of vice is essentially egoistic. Jesus must needs come to show to men the higher motives to purity.

"The immoral man is a hypocrite, a coward, an ingrate and a traitor. For he is taking with one hand from his fellows the blessings of their integrity and purity and kindness, and with the other he is giving back in some sneaking, underhanded way the curses of dishonesty, uncleanness, and cruelty. . . . To act like a brute, and still to move among men, to wallow with the beasts, and still to claim a home made sweet and pure by woman—this receiving good and rendering evil in return, this living like a parasite on a social system, out of which one is sucking the life-blood, this in plain terms is what the immoral man amounts to, this is precisely what it means to be a sinner."[5]

The effects of immorality upon womanhood, childhood, the home, society, the nation; the appeal to chivalry—these our author does not largely consider.

In Chapters 7, 8, and 9 the sage makes the profound suggestion that Wisdom uses just as great effort as Folly to find guests for her house.

Wisdom hath builded her house;
She hath hewn out her seven pillars:
She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine;
She hath also furnished her table:
She hath sent forth her maidens;
She crieth upon the highest places of the city:
Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:
As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,
Come, eat ye of my bread,
And drink of the wine which I have mingled.
Leave off, ye simple ones, and live;
And walk in the way of understanding.
—Prov. 9: 1-6.

We have already observed the prophet's thought of the

[5] Hyde, "God's Education of Man," p. 84ff.

allurements of God (p. 224). Have the great servants of the common good never been tempted? Have they never heard the appeal of Folly? But they have had eyes to see the house of Wisdom and the house of Folly, the feasts which they spread, and the guests who have accepted their invitations. As they have regarded the house of Folly, they have noticed that

the dead are there;
That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.—Prov. 9: 18.

In Chapter 8 Wisdom is personified in a way which suggests an important tendency in Jewish thought.

Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Before the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth;
While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.
When he established the heavens, I was there:
When he set a circle upon the face of the deep,
When he made firm the skies above,
When the fountains of the deep became strong,
When he gave to the sea its bound,
That the waters should not transgress his commandment,
When he marked out the foundations of the earth;
Then I was by him, as a master workman;
And I was daily his delight,
Rejoicing always before him,
Rejoicing in his habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men.
—Prov. 8: 22-31.

Wisdom became in the minds of later thinkers almost, if not quite, an actual person. We have seen how some of the Jews of the Dispersion sought to harmonize the Hebrew faith with the Greek philosophy. In the time of Jesus Philo of Alexandria, working at this great problem, identified the

Hebrew Wisdom with the Greek Reason. Then came the interpretation of Jesus by John's gospel, which would seem practically to say: "As Philo identified Wisdom with the Logos or Reason, I identify Jesus with the Logos." Thus we have the great equation: The Hebrew Wisdom equals the Greek Logos equals the historic Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Twenty-second Week, Third Day.

One may not close these nine chapters without observing that such warnings and invitations, noble, important as they are, are half futile. No man knows so well as the doctors the ruinous effects of drugs; but doctors furnish many drug victims. We doubtless need information, but far more do we need inspiration. Not so much do we need proverbs as power.

Read Prov. 22: 1-16 for a five-minute visit with a wise man.

b. *Advice and Observations of the Wise.*

In Book II, extending from Chapter 10 to 22: 16 we have 375 unit proverbs, each complete in itself. They bring to us the wise man's thought of God, his omniscience, his equity, his resistless but wholly beneficent will. God is on the side of the poor man (11: 1; 14: 31). The importance of words is stressed almost as earnestly as in the teaching of Jesus. We read of the lips of truth (12: 19), the lips of peace (14: 17, 29; 15: 1; 16: 32), the lips of folly (18: 6, 7), the lips which separate even friends (17: 9). More impressive are the proverbs of the heart. The writer understood the close relation of the heart life to health.

> A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh;
> But envy is the rottenness of the bones.—Prov. 14: 30.

He was familiar with the sorrowful and the lonely heart. He had shared the experience of Henry Drummond, the princely friend, of whom his biographer writes: "Through the radiance of his presence and the familiarity of his talk,

there stole out upon those who were becoming his friends the sense of great loneliness and silence behind, as when you catch a snowpeak across the summer fragrance and music of a Swiss meadow."

> "Yes, in the sea of life enisled,
> With echoing straits between us thrown,
> Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
> We mortal millions live *alone*."

> The heart knoweth its own bitterness;
> And a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.—
> Prov. 14: 10.

The rewards offered by the proverbs of the second book are the goods of this present life: length of days, peace, prosperity, good reputation, and the like. Two words seem to venture beyond this life:

> To the wise the way of life goeth upward,
> That he may depart from Sheol beneath.—Prov. 15: 24.

But "there is in this verse [probably] no intimation of happy immortality."

> The wicked is thrust down in his calamity (margin),
> But the righteous hath a refuge in his death.—Prov. 14: 32.

If the reading is correct, we have here apparently "a doctrine of immortality, which is ignored in the rest of the book."

Twenty-second Week, Fourth Day.

Read Proverbs 24, making special note of the proverbs of philanthropy, and those which reject the law of retaliation, and approach the law of Jesus.

c. *"A Little Manual of Conduct."*

In Book III, 22: 17-24: 34, we have "a graceful and quite complete little manual of conduct, especially regarding what may be called secondary duties of life and manners."[6]

[6] Genung, quoted by Fowler.

Like all his brothers, the compiler of this manual is a sworn foe of the slacker, the sluggard.

I went by the field of the sluggard,
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I beheld, and considered well;
I saw, and received instruction:
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep;
So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.—Prov. 24: 30-34.

"The longer on this earth we live,
And weigh the various qualities of men,
Seeing how most are fugitive
Or fitful gifts, at best, of now and then,
Wind-wavered, corpse lights, daughters of the fen,
The more we feel the high stern-featured beauty
Of plain devotedness to duty;
Stedfast and still, nor paid with mortal praise,
But finding amplest recompense
For life's ungarlanded expense
In work done squarely and unwasted days."
—James Russell Lowell, "Under the Old Elm."

Aside from the familiar emphases, the manual dwells upon the rights of property, good manners at a king's table, and similar topics. And then we have a sonnet on wine, one of the most remarkable indictments of intemperance to be read in literature.

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?
Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?
They that tarry long at the wine;
They that go to seek out mixed wine.
Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it sparkleth in the cup,
When it goeth down smoothly:

At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder.
Thine eyes shall behold strange things,
And thy heart shall utter perverse things.
Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea,
Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not hurt;
They have beaten me, and I felt it not:
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.—Prov. 23: 29-35.

Poets have been very fond of praising the flowing bowl, the ruby wine. It would be worth while to gather an anthology, which would make us feel the bite, the sting. Such an anthology might include this:

"At the punch-bowl's brink,
Let the thirsty think
What they say in Japan:

'First the man takes a drink,
Then the drink takes a drink,
Then the drink takes the man!'"—E. R. Sill.

And this, from Le Gallienne:

"This shall the vine do for you: it shall break
The woman's heart that loves you; it shall take
Away from you your friends, sad, one by one,
And of your own kind heart an agate make."

The social significance of the sin of drink did not greatly concern the writer of Proverbs.

This third book is more rich than the others in proverbs of social salvation. In 22: 22, 23 God is recognized as the kinsman-redeemer of the poor.

Rob not the poor, because he is poor;
Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:
For Jehovah will plead their cause,
And despoil of life those that despoil them.

In 24: 11, 12, the flimsy excuses by which we try to deceive

ourselves for our lack of brotherhood are torn away and we are reminded that we cannot deceive God.

> Deliver them that are carried away unto death,
> And those that are ready to be slain see that thou hold back.
> If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this;
> Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?
> And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?

Nowadays, our money and our postal service and our commerce and our missionaries have given us oftentimes arms long enough and strong enough to deliver a man in China, or a man in India, or a man in Armenia. And if a man says, "I didn't happen to read the missionary journals," "doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it?"

Twenty-second Week, Fifth Day.

As the poor and the perishing are to be the objects of compassion, so the fall of one's enemy is not to bring to us gladness—a hard saying, this.

> Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
> And let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown.
> —Prov. 24: 17 (*cf.* Job 31: 29).

Nor is a man to return evil for evil; he is not to take advantage of the *lex talionis*, which was not only the permitted, but the commanded law of the Semite world:

> Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;
> I will render to the man according to his work.—Prov. 24: 29.

The words seem like messages from the New Testament. When one asks the writer's motive for this high, almost Christlike morality, one is disappointed. A man is not to gloat over his enemy; why?

> Lest Jehovah see it, and it displease him,
> And he turn away his wrath from him.—Prov. 24: 18.

God may be more interested in punishing the inflated and contemptuous man than in punishing the man despised.

d. *Comments on Life and the Day's Work.*

Read Prov. 25, Little Studies in the Art of Living Together.

Book IV carries us through Chapters 25 to 29. Its proverbs may be studied, when opportunity offers, under the headings:

(1) Concerning God and man.

(2) Concerning man and man.

It is fascinating to remember that our Lord was familiar with the Proverbs, and talked with men who knew them well.

> Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king,
> And stand not in the place of great men:
> For better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither,
> Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince,
> Whom thine eyes have seen.—Prov. 25:6, 7 (*Cf.* Luke 14:7-11).

Paul found in the old book words which expressed his own lofty Christian morality.

> If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
> And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
> For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head.—Prov. 25:21, 22 (*Cf.* Rom. 12: 20).

Here again the motive suggested by the proverb is one of self-regard, if not selfishness: "Jehovah will reward thee"; but the conduct breaks absolutely with the old-time customary morality. The message finds a fitting footnote in the words of Orville Dewey:

"Every relation to mankind of hate, or scorn, or neglect is full of vexation and torment. There is nothing to do with men but to love them, to contemplate their virtues with admiration, their faults with pity and forbearance, their injuries with forgiveness. Task all the ingenuity of your mind to devise some other thing, but you can never find it. To hate your adversary will not help you; nothing within the compass of the universe can help you, but to love him."

And the Great War has justified itself in the thoughts of Christian men in so far as it has been the expression, even in its most ghastly transactions, of our love both for those we have counted our allies and those we have counted our foes.

e. *Further Hints to Men and Women Who Wish to "Count."*

In Book V, Chapters 30 and 31, we have shorter collections. In Chapter 30 there is a beautiful and worthy prayer, in which one asks that he may belong to the middle class:

> Two things have I asked of thee;
> Deny me them not before I die:
> Remove far from me falsehood and lies;
> Give me neither poverty nor riches;
> Feed me with the food that is needful for me:
> Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is Jehovah?
> Or lest I be poor, and steal,
> And use profanely the name of my God.—Prov. 30:7-9.

The lines are worth memorizing by students, concerning whose fathers and elder brothers Robert Service could write "The Trail of Ninety-Eight." He is thinking of the lure of the gold of the Yukon:

> "Never was seen such an army,
> Pitiful, futile, unfit;
> Never was seen such a spirit,
> Manifold courage and grit.
> Never has been such a cohort,
> Under one banner unrolled,
> As surged to the ragged-edged Arctic,
> Urged by the arch-tempter, Gold. . . .
>
> Never will I forget it,
> There on the mountain-face,
> Ant-like, men with their burdens,
> Clinging in icy space;
> Dogged, determined and dauntless,
> Cruel and callous and cold,
> Cursing, blaspheming, reviling,
> And ever that battle-cry, Gold!"

"It is perfectly terrible to be worth nothing but money."

The proverb is perhaps too deeply impressed by the perils of poverty. Says William James:

"We have grown literally afraid to be poor. The desire to gain wealth and the fear to lose it are our chief breeders of cowardice and propagators of corruption. . . . The prevalent fear of poverty among the educated classes is the worst moral disease from which our civilization suffers."

But one of the most hopeful signs in American life is the multiplication of the modest streets in our cities, where men and women of the middle class are paying for their homes, living worthily of America's democratic tradition and hope.

Twenty-second Week, Sixth Day.

In Chapter 30 we have a charming number sonnet, regarding certain small but wise creatures at whose tiny feet we Americans do well to sit, we who so often confuse bigness with greatness, who boast of belonging to the biggest city or the biggest state, or the biggest nation, forgetting that a big man may be a big fool and that girth not matched by height may be a signal of warning to a life insurance company.

There are four things which are little upon the earth,
But they are exceeding wise:
The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they provide their food in the summer;
The conies are but a feeble folk,
Yet make they their houses in the rocks;
The locusts have no king,
Yet go they forth all of them by bands;
The lizard taketh hold with her hands,
Yet is she in kings' palaces.—Prov. 30: 24-28.

In Chapter 31 there is a proverb on wine which may seem to qualify the indictment of Chapter 23:

It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine;
Nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?
Lest they drink, and forget the law,
And pervert the justice due to any that is afflicted.

Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,
And wine unto the bitter in soul:
Let him drink, and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more.—Prov. 31:4-7.

The man who drinks to forget his poverty and his misery will find both grown large when he awakes. The proverb offers its own partial corrective. "It is not for kings to drink wine." Nowadays when an acclaimed monarch departs with every morning newspaper, every man's a king.

In 31:10-31 we have an acrostic poem, each couplet beginning with the appropriate letter of the Hebrew alphabet, a poem happily called "The A B C of the Perfect Wife."

She maketh linen garments and selleth them,
And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
Strength and dignity are her clothing;
And she laugheth at the time to come.
She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And the law of kindness is on her tongue.
She looketh well to the ways of her household,
And eateth not the bread of idleness.
Her children rise up, and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praiseth her, saying:
Many daughters have done worthily,
But thou excellest them all.
Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain;
But a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the gates.
—Prov. 31:24-31.

This ideal woman is characterized by industry, financial skill, prudence, reverence, and wise and kindly speech.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And the law of kindness is on her tongue."

"She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right, and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown."

Her husband still sits with men alone at the city gate,

managing without her help, and doubtless rather ineffectively, the local politics. We have here a very lofty type of womanhood, with which one may well contrast even the best womanhood produced by Athens in the days of her greatest glory.

It is easy for the Christian to criticize as defective the ethics of the Proverbs. "Courage, fortitude, moderation in thought, self-sacrifice, intellectual truthfulness, are not mentioned. Nothing is said about international ethics." In its prudential morality, the book is distinctly ante-Christian. It has also been noticed that its studies are all in whites and blacks, rather than grays. Our great problems concern the grays. The strenuous ethical code of Kipling's "If" is not for the writers of the Proverbs. The great life of Brooks or of Mott would not be set on fire by their words. At the same time the book presents a code of ethics emphatically nobler than that dominant in America before the Great War, though men had had opportunity to study it for 2,200 years. The motives to conduct are often self-centered, but the conduct counseled approaches the ideal.

Aside from their ethical value, the Proverbs are of great interest as revealing to us the life and thought of the average God-fearing Jew of the Greek period, the man who seldom or never asked "ultimate questions," who knew little of the agony and the glory of the prophet and the poet, who cared little for the elaborate ceremonies of the priest, but who tried to do his work well to the glory of God.

Our writers walk in quiet fields, in the land of homely duties and common courtesies, fields safely walled off from the precipices of vice, remote as well from the Himalaya heights of vision and adventure.

President King calls our attention to a character in one of Norman Duncan's stories, who, speaking of his childhood and his mother, says:

"She took me in her lap.
'Look into your mother's eyes, lad,' she said, 'and say after me this: "My mother"'—
'My mother,' I repeated, very solemnly.

'"Looked upon my heart"'—
'Looked upon my heart,' said I.
'"And found it brave"'—
'An' found it brave'—
'"And sweet"'—
'An' sweet'—
'"Willing for the day's work"'—
'Willing for the day's work'—
'"And harboring no shameful hope"'—
'An' harboring no shameful hope'—

Again and again she had me say it, until I knew every word by heart.

'Ah,' she said at last, 'but you'll forget.'

'No, no!' I cried. 'I'll not forget.'

'"My mother looked upon my heart,"' I rattled, '"an' found it brave and sweet, willing for the day's work an' harboring no shameful hope." I've not forgot, I've not forgot.'

'He'll forget,' she whispered, but not to me, 'like all children.'

But I have never forgotten—that, when I was a child, my mother looked upon my heart and found it brave and sweet, willing for the day's work, and harboring no shameful hope."

Could the Proverbs speak in the tones and terms of the twentieth century, they would bring us some such message, and seek from us—children all—some such response.

Twenty-second Week, Seventh Day.

6. The Song of Solomon, Love-Lyrics of Israel

The Proverbs remind us that all the people of the later days of Judaism were not great saints or great doubters. There were thousands of people who did not think very much, who did not sink to the depths or rise to the heights. But God loved them, "or he wouldn't have made so many of them." They tried to keep out of debt, to teach their children a trade; they lived a clean and decent life, with simple pleasures, small excursions, honest joys. A glimpse of this life of the common people, probably in the earlier days of the Greek period, we get in the Song of Songs, or Canticles.

The Jewish doctors at Jamnia found in the Song an allegory. The early Christian scholars shared their belief. The headings of the pages of the Song in our Authorized Version would constrain to a like interpretation, which leads to absurdity. Some scholars find in the Song a drama, with a charming plot.[7]

More probably we have in the Song a group of rather loosely connected lyrics, such as were sung alternately by bridegroom and bride in the course of the eight days of the wedding feast. In this "king's week," as it was called, the bridegroom now and then posed as royalty, and his humble comrades were his courtiers. In one guise and another the bridegroom sang the praises of his bride, and the bride answered back with eulogies upon her beloved (See Song of Sol. 8:6, 7).

No great battles of men or ideas here; just ordinary—yet how extraordinary—human love and longing and marriage and home. Are not these, too, worth treasuring in thought? Was not Jesus one day to enter with his own transfiguring grace the marriage feast?

"The lord of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The brother of want and blame,
The lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame
All passions of mortal ken."
—Richard Watson Gilder, "The Passing of Christ."

Concluding Note

Unless a Jew lived in a vacuum, he could not escape the "free and exhilarating" atmosphere of the Greek civilization, which, with Alexander, swept over Palestine. Men of prophetic spirit rightly feared the influence of the new culture. From the days of Amos the higher faith of the Hebrews had been characterized by something of the stern and lofty

[7] Griffis, "Lily among Thorns."

quality of the mountain and the desert. Ivory couches and secular music and wine and rationalistic argument tended to the ungirt life. Few are the voices of prophecy which we hear in the Greek period, and those to which we have listened sing of Jewish, namely Jehovah's, domination over the Gentiles or their destruction. We have heard, in our study of Esther, the voice of nationalism, redeemed from unworthiness by its fine heroism and its confidence in the high destiny of the Jew. In Ecclesiastes we have heard a brave man, who tried to adjust himself to this new Greek world; who believed that God was in his heaven, but as surely believed that all was wrong with the world.

> "For the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."
> —Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach."

In the Chronicles we have listened to the voice of faith, which has looked upon the successes and the sufferings of Judah to find, almost too easily, a perfect vindication of the justice and the goodness of God. The Proverbs and the Song of Solomon have permitted us to hear echoes of the city and village thought and life, voices of the wisdom and the gaiety of the common lot. And in the midst of all the voices—of faith, and nationalism, of doubt and duty and love —carried by the airs of the Greek culture, we seem

> "To hear a Heavenly Friend,
> And thro' thick veils to apprehend
> A labor working to an end."

We are not able, perhaps, to mark any great advance in religious thinking in our period, but one leaves its study with many messages of value to character and conduct. Our

study brings to us this reflection: How wonderful was God's confidence in the little, beaten, broken people of the Jews, that he dared trust to them his supreme self-revelation. And how wonderful, too, was the Jewish faith in God, a faith which was not lost, was not defeated, but rose triumphant in the very midst of the welter of the new ideas, new customs, new sins of the Greek world.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What would you expect to be the influence of Jewish colonies upon Jerusalem and of Jerusalem upon the colonies?

2. Can you conceive how a genuine prophet could proclaim the doom of all Gentiles?

3. What elements of strength and weakness would you expect to find in a Jewish faith nourished by the book of Esther?

4. Have you found any cure for fear? (See Esther).

5. Have you ever met a man who resembles Ecclesiastes? Does a man of Ecclesiastes' mood and temper "see things steadily and see them whole"? How would you try to cure a modern Ecclesiastes?

6. If Ecclesiastes had been assured of immortality, would he have been made strong and efficient? Isaiah did not apparently know of immortality. Contrast the Chronicler's viewpoint with that of Ecclesiastes.

7. Marie Bashkirtseff, in her journal, writes, "It is the New Year. At the theater, precisely at midnight, watch in hand, I wish my wish, in a single word, intoxicating, whether it be written or spoken, Fame." Compare and contrast this wish with the wish for Wisdom.

8. How would you try to teach a Hindu student to find Wisdom?

9. Romanes, called "the greatest Darwinian since Darwin," writes: "Nothing is so inimical to Christian belief as unchristian conduct. This is especially the case as regards impurity, for whether the fact be explained on religious or non-religious

grounds, it has had more to do with unbelief than has the speculative reason." Do you believe that impurity tends to unbelief, and that purity of life leads to faith? If so, why?

10. Have you any plans for increasing the number of "the middle class"?

CHAPTER XIII

"The Daybreak Calls"

Heroisms and Hopes of the Maccabean and Hasmonean Periods (168–38 B. C.)

Introductory

Twenty-third Week, First Day.

The Ptolemies had been fairly lenient in their treatment of the Jews, but when Antiochus III with his Syrians supplanted the rule of Egypt in 198 B. C. he was joyfully welcomed to Jerusalem. All hopes of lighter taxes and greater liberties soon faded. In 175 B. C. Antiochus IV, who styled himself God Manifest, came to the throne and set out with the definite purpose to Hellenize his entire empire.

Before noting the insane activities of this man it may be well to glance at a book, belonging probably to the first quarter of the second century, which, while not in the Bible of the Protestant Church, was held in high repute among the early Christians, and is today found in the so-called Apocrypha. This book, variously called Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Sirach, or Ben-Sira, is the work of a widely traveled and widely interested Jew, who wrote down in philosophic mood his observations on life. Says an historian:

"If we would know what a cultured, liberal, and yet genuine Jew had thought and felt in view of the great questions of the day; if we would gain insight into the state of public opinion, morals, society, and even of manners at that period—we find the materials for it in the book Ecclesiasticus."

The writer is a warm patriot, and cherishes the hope that

all Israel shall yet live in unity and prosperity. He is an eager lover of the temple; he glories in the richness of the priestly robes and the glad songs of the singers. He lives generally in the atmosphere of the book of Proverbs, but he has been more deeply affected by the life of the Greeks. In one of his most famous passages he writes in praise of physicians, whose profession was regarded with little respect by certain religionists who believed alone in "divine healing":

"Cultivate the physician in accordance with the need of him,
For him also hath God ordained. . . .
God hath created medicines out of the earth,
And let not a discerning man reject them."

He has been touched, too, by the cynicism of Ecclesiastes. He has no sympathy with those eager souls who have begun to tell men of a resurrection, and an after-life of reward and punishment. Sheol is the fate of all men; but he does hope for the immortality of his good name. He has, perhaps, a thought of the immortality of influence, a hope of joining

"the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead, who live again
In minds made better by their presence,
. . . the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

He writes:

"For the memorial of virtue is immortal;
Because it is known with God and with man.
When it is present, men take example by it;
And when it is gone, they desire it:
And throughout all time it marcheth crowned in triumph,
Victorious in the strife for the prizes that are undefiled."[1]

It is good to remember this wise, aristocratic, but kindly man who realizes that without the humble handworkers

"shall not a city be inhabited,
Nor shall men sojourn or go up and down therein,
For these maintain the fabric of the world,
And in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer."

[1] Quoted from "The Soul of the Bible," p. 290.

And as we make our way into the terrible and heroic period of the Maccabees, we may well take his word as the motto of the story:

> "Fight for the right until death,
> And the Lord will fight for thee."

Antiochus IV made the Jewish high-priesthood a plaything for graft and death. He removed Onias from the office, and gave it to Jason, who eagerly cooperated in the task of Hellenizing and heathenizing his people. Jason went so far as to send Jewish funds to Tyre for the celebration of the sacrifices to Heracles. But Antiochus was always in need of money, and neither had nor desired any conscience; accordingly he gave the high-priesthood to a higher bidder, Menelaus.

Jerusalem has seldom been quite free from traitors who would murder her, from pseudo-patriots who would curry favor with her conquerors. When on December 18, 1914, the Turkish holy flag entered Jerusalem to proclaim a holy war upon all Christians, Jews constructed an arch bearing two shields, with Hebrew legends. One read, "Long Live the Ottoman Army." The other read, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. We bless you out of the house of the Lord."[2] Thus to our own day Jews have been found in the holy city who have kissed the sword that would slay them, and degraded the faith by which their nation lives.

The rumor spread that Antiochus had died while on an expedition to Egypt. Jason thought he saw a chance of winning back his authority, and by a surprise attack seized Jerusalem. Antiochus came to life somewhat prematurely, hurried in uncontrollable rage to Jerusalem, gave over the wretched citizens to massacre, robbed the temple of its treasures, and left in control of the city and of the Syrian garrison an official of exceptional brutality. In 168 B. C. Antiochus again turned his cruel attention to Judah. He sent a revenue officer with an army of 22,000 men "with instructions

[2] Kemper Fullerton.

to exterminate the Jewish people, and to colonize the city with Greeks." Thousands were killed. Many found refuge in the villages and in the fierce, friendly wilderness. The Syrians forbade on pain of death all Jewish customs and rites—Sabbath observance, circumcision, the reading of the law, the performance of sacrifice. Festivals of Bacchus were instituted in the towns, and the Jews were compelled to participate in the celebrations. They were also made to eat swine's flesh. In December, 168 B. C., "upon the altar of burnt offering a smaller altar" was built, dedicated to Olympian Zeus, and the profanation of the temple was completed by the sacrifice of a sow to the Greek deity. Heathen orgies were carried on in the temple courts.

And one can almost hear today the jeers of the fashionable debauchees, who inquire of the Jews: "Where is now this God of yours, who was to care for his temple and his chosen ones?" Now at last must faith in Jehovah perish from the earth! But this faith takes an unconscionable time in dying.

Twenty-third Week, Second Day.

Seldom in human history has there been seen such an exhibition of the triumph of the human spirit as that which we now study. Jerusalem meant more to the Jew than did Athens to the Greek, than did Rome to the Roman. The walls of his city were torn down, and he was banished from his home, which now some Greek or some apostate occupied. The temple, the center of his religious thought and hope, was polluted by the grossest heathen sacrilege. But again men sprang to their feet, "caught at God's skirts, and prayed." Mattathias, a hero of the strictest faith, gathered about him a group of those who dared all for their God and their people. At first, the devotees of the Law refused to fight on the Sabbath; but after a bloody defeat due to this refusal, they were induced by Mattathias to fight on the Sabbath in self-defense. The hero's death brought his great son Judas Maccabeus to the leadership of the seemingly forlorn hope. The fugitives

established at Mizpah the best possible imitation of the old Jerusalem ritual. Harrying the Syrians by surprise attacks, Judas gathered numbers and strength. One victory after another led him back to Jerusalem, which he entered in 165 B. C., there to reestablish the worship of Jehovah precisely three years after the defilement of the temple.

1. Daniel: Old Heroes, New Hopes

From the tragic years of Antiochus Epiphanes, probably from the year 165 B. C., there has come down to us the book of Daniel.

Consider again the situation: the temple profaned; the city walls leveled to the ground; the city itself thronged with Greeks and apostates, who burned incense before their doors; Greek customs in fashion; a Greek gymnasium hard by the temple; the daily murder of devotees of the Law; the daily destruction of books of the Law wherever found: every earthly inducement to surrender a faith, adherence to which meant misery or death. One thinks of the heroic Chinese victims of the Boxer outrages, but the Jews represented not only a loftier religion but a loftier civilization than the Boxers. One thinks of the heroic Armenian victims of Turkish atrocities; but these knew that their culture as well as their religion was loftier than that of their persecutors. The persecutors of the Jews represented a civilization whose culture, whose libraries, whose art and architecture, whose commerce, whose gaiety, might well stifle faith and lure to apostasy.

It was apparently to meet this situation that the author of Daniel told his stories of the ancient heroes and his visions of the present and of the days to come.

Twenty-third Week, Third Day.

a. *Daniel and His Friends.*

Read Dan. 1 to 3, stories of victors "in the strife for the prizes that are undefiled."

The first six chapters of the book are occupied with Daniel and his friends. In exile, far from Jerusalem, these young heroes still purpose in their hearts that they will not defile themselves with the king's dainties; that they will be true to the Law, with reference to clean and unclean meats (1:8-16). Their heroic fidelity to the Law and its reward would preach a fine sermon of constancy to the young men who were now victims of Antiochus, with his swine's flesh and heathen allurements. Conquering the heathen in the realm of material things, Daniel conquers in the realm of divine mysteries (Chapters 2 and 5). Like Joseph in the earlier days, Daniel masters the insoluble problem of the soothsayers and unlocks the secret of the king's dream, or again the meaning of the handwriting on the wall. So would the writer bid his readers take courage. All the vaunted learning and religious lore of Greece are foolishness in the face of the wisdom which the God of heaven gives to the faithful.

Daniel's friends meet the question: "Will you serve the image which the king commands you to worship?" And the answer comes back swift and straight as an arrow to its mark: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (3:17, 18). And the glorious words, *"But if not,"* challenge the poor and tempted Jews, who wonder whether after all it would be such a serious matter to burn incense to Zeus or to pour out libations to Bacchus. Life is very sweet even to the miserable.

Again, the narrative shows us Daniel facing a test not unlike that met by the three friends; but the question is not: "Will you worship other gods?" but "Will you persist in the worship of your own God, the God of Israel?" And Daniel has his answer ready. Men are just outside his window eager to see him cast into the den of lions; but he flings open his window toward Jerusalem and prays to his God as at other times. And one sees the little groups of nameless fighters

gathering around Judas Maccabeus in the chill night air of the wilderness, to hear the story of Daniel, and to warm their hearts at the flames of his defiant deathless fidelity, and to make ready for their

"rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade."

b. *History and Hope.*

With Chapter 7 the writer passes from stories to visions. In these visions, four world-empires are again and again referred to. Probably the author had in mind the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian, and finally the Greek. The ten kings rising from the fourth kingdom apparently include Alexander himself and his nine successors in the Syrian portion of the realm. In elaborate detail Antiochus Epiphanes the tyrant is described. He is the one who speaks words against the Most High, wears out the saints of the Most High, and thinks to change the times and the law (7:25). He, too, is the little horn, which waxes great even to the host of heaven; who takes away the continual burnt offerings, and casts truth down to the earth (8:9-12). In Chapter 11, as the author portrays in veiled language the story of the years, he comes down again to his own day and pictures his oppressor, the blasphemous, infamous Antiochus.

> And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods; and he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his place shall he honor the god of fortresses; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things. And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god: whosoever acknowledgeth him he will increase with glory; and he shall cause them to

rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price.—Dan. 11:36-39.

The worst charge against him is that he profanes the sanctuary and establishes heathen worship at Jehovah's altar. "And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt-offering, and they shall set up the abomination that maketh desolate" (11:31).

Twenty-third Week, Fourth Day.

But just when you look to see our author and his faith collapse, you see him put his trumpet to his lips, and hear him sound the note of triumph over despots and heathenism and death.

In one of the earlier chapters, he has already given a noble description of the abiding kingdom of Jehovah.

> And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.—Dan. 2:44, 45.

And now, in vision, he sees the judgment proceeding in the high court of heaven. The books are opened. The beast-empires, which ruled by force, have their dominion taken away; "but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time" (7:12). Then into the presence of the Ancient of Days comes one like unto a son of man, impersonating the saints of the Most High (7:22).

> I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they

> brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.—Dan. 7: 13, 14, 21, 22.

To him is given an everlasting dominion, a kingdom that shall not be destroyed. From the unequal contest which Judas Maccabeus and his friends are waging, the seer looks up to behold the day when the kingdom of the human—to him the kingdom of faithful Israel—shall triumph over the beastly, brutal kingdoms. The Christian world has seen in our Master the very incarnation of the faithful, the ideal, Israel, and finds among the most precious titles of our Lord, the Son of Man, who wins his universal and eternal kingdom by grace and truth, and holds in thrall the brute.

As our writer is absolutely sure of the triumph of the Cause, he is equally sure of the triumph of the individual servant of the Cause. The book of Daniel gives to us the most radiant picture of the resurrection and the eternal life to be read in the Old Testament. No longer is Sheol a dusty realm of shades, the end of all who live. Many of those who sleep in the dust shall awake, and while some are doomed to everlasting contempt, some shall rise to "everlasting life" (12:2). The author was one of those,

> "to whom was given
> The joy that mixes earth with Heaven:
>
> Who, rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And did not dream it was a dream;
>
> But heard, by secret transport led,
> Even in the charnels of the dead,
> The murmur of the fountain-head."

In his book, "Facts and Comments," Herbert Spencer says: "It seems a strange and repugnant conclusion that, with the cessation of consciousness at death, there ceases to be any knowledge of having existed." Spencer lived his quiet, kindly, comfortable life in his beautiful England. How strange and repugnant must have seemed the thought of Sheol to those heroes who faced daily death for their faith in a universal God of power and justice and love! They could not have held, or at any rate vindicated to themselves, their faith which facts laughed down, had not the light of Jehovah shined upon them; and in that light they saw the glory of the future world. In that future world, they were assured, each man's character would be revealed and each man would go to his own place. "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (12:3).

The book of Daniel was never counted by the Jews among the prophetical works. But "Dr. Westcott has pronounced that no writing in the Old Testament had so great a share in the development of Christianity as the book of Daniel." Its immediate purpose was fulfilled years ago. Those who try to make the visions, with their words concerning times and seasons, fit specific events of our own day are following a will o' the wisp which has led multitudes of readers away into dismal swamps of error. But whoever tries to pray may learn from Daniel a beautiful lesson in prayer (see especially 9:17-19). Whoever has to fight for his own faith or that of his brothers, whoever has to stand by principles which simply amuse other men, will read the book and find iron passing into his own blood. As a man closes the book, he seems to hear again the word of Ben-Sira:

"Fight for the right until death,
And the Lord will fight for thee."

Rather he hears old Greatheart speak once more:

"My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it.

My marks and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles, who shall now be my rewarder."

Twenty-third Week, Fifth Day.

Historical Note

Before his death, 160 B. C., Judas Maccabeus had won complete religious liberty for his people. Simon, who came to the high-priesthood in 143-142 B. C., became King of the Jews "in all but name." In 138 B. C. Simon received the right "to coin money for his country with his own dies." "Simon's dynasty received the name Hasmonean, derived from Hashmon, the great-grandfather or grandfather of Mattathias." John Hyrcanus, 135-104 B. C., made large additions to the Jewish territory, but left it to his son Aristobulus to assume the name of king. Alexander Jannaeus, the son of Aristobulus, was a "brilliant drunkard," who disgraced both his titles, King and High-Priest.[3] After some decades of petty squabbles between religious and political parties, Rome saw her chance. Pompey sided with one of the conflicting parties, and finally in 63 B. C., on a Sabbath, took the city, forced his way to the temple mount, massacred the priests as they performed their sacrifices, and is said to have slain 12,000 Jews.

Pompey permitted the high-priesthood to be retained by the Hasmonean family, but the civic administration he turned over to a Roman. When Pompey returned to Rome for his "triumph," there were captive Jews in his train. The last representative of the old Maccabean family was killed in 37 B. C., and "Herod became King of the Jews in fact, as well as by title of the Roman authority"—Herod, who was to rebuild the temple in which the child Jesus would one day talk with the doctors; Herod, whose ancestors of Edom were the hiss and the by-word of the Hebrew prophets;

[3] For brief accounts of period, see G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," vol. I, p. 404ff. and vol. II, p. 437ff.; also Streane, "Age of the Maccabees."

Herod, of whom it was said, "It is better to be Herod's swine than his son."

2. The Apocalyptic Literature

During the two centuries before the Christian era, apocalyptic literature, of which we have seen an illustration in the visions of the book of Daniel, came to its abundant fruitage. And this literature furnished the seed of much of the thought of the New Testament and later Christian times. The popular belief of the period was that prophecy was dead. The past, therefore, came to be idealized and the Scriptures to be sedulously studied. While monotheism was securely established, God himself was pushed far away from ordinary life. As men were excluded from their old-time fellowship with God, mediating spirits—angels bad and good—were introduced, who hindered or helped men and nations in their courses. The frightful experiences of war and persecution; the apparent helplessness of men in the grip of world forces; the sordid quarrels of the priestly party, who sought Jewish independence, with the legalistic party, who were content with religious liberty and hated the political assumptions of the priests—all these factors led earnest men to cry, "How long, O Lord, how long? Shall the words of godly men and the ways of God never be justified by the event? Are all our former hopes but withered dreams?" To this situation the apocalyptic, or revealing, literature addressed itself.

Scholars call our attention to several characteristics of this literature:

First, it brings its messages under the protection of some great name of the past—for only so could the authors get a hearing.

Second, it writes history as prophecy.

Third, it claims supernatural revelation.

Fourth, its interests are supramundane—that is, of the world beyond the present world of time and space.

At first we are repelled, or morbidly attracted, by this

literature, which frequently is to us alien and unintelligible. But we are called back to its study by the words of a great scholar: "We are now in a position to prove that these two centuries (the last two before Christ) were in some respects centuries of greater spiritual progress than any two that had preceded them in Israel."[4]

In this literature we discover the various currents of thought which we have learned in our previous studies to distinguish. We see, for example, the traces of the "conflict between nationalism and universalism, that finally results in the divorce between Judaism and Christianity."

Twenty-third Week, Sixth Day.

Thus, in the "Book of Jubilees" (135-104 or 60 B. C. ?), we have the most bigoted emphasis upon ritual. The book is the very quintessence of that legalism which a century later our Lord attacked. It tells us that circumcision is an eternal covenant, "observed by the two highest orders of angels, and that every Israelite who is not circumcised on the eighth day belongs to the children of destruction." On the Sabbath one must not light a fire, or ride a beast, or draw water, or travel by ship, or carry any burden. The violation of any of these prohibitions is death. Indeed one dare not even talk on the Sabbath concerning an intended journey.

This emphasis upon legalism implies, of course, the exclusion of the Gentiles from salvation in the present and the future world. A woman who marries a heathen must be burned, and a man who gives his daughter or sister in marriage to a heathen must be stoned to death.

Other writings of the period, notably the "Book of Enoch," express the confident hope that the Gentiles will be converted to Jehovah.

While the Old Testament writers looked forward to the establishment of the glorious future kingdom on this earth,

[4] R. H. Charles, "Religious Development between the Old and the New Testaments," a small but valuable volume.

the apocalyptic writers worked away from this thought. From this sad and seemingly hopeless world they began to look to the world of spirits. When the Greek Socrates was asked, "Where shall the ideal community be found?" he replied sadly, "Perhaps in heaven." So we find our writers turning more and more toward heaven as their dearest country. "The eternal Messianic kingdom can attain its consummation only in the world to come, into which the righteous should enter through the gate of resurrection."

The Messiah does not often appear as an important factor in the Messianic kingdom of the apocalyptic writers; but in "Enoch" we have a picture of a heavenly Messiah, who bears such titles as Christ, or the Anointed One, the Righteous One, the Elect One, the Son of Man. We read:

"And there I saw one who had a head of days
And his head was white like wool,
And with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man.
And his face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels."

Again:

"On that day Mine Elect One shall sit on the throne of glory,
And shall try their works,
And their places of rest shall be innumerable."

Again:

"And he sat on the throne of his glory,
And the sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man,
And he caused the sinners to pass away from off the face of the earth,
And those who have led the world astray."[5]

It was the high task of our writers to carry to its legitimate goal the emphasis of later prophetic thought upon the individual, to insist upon his priceless worth to God, his destiny

[5] R. H. Charles, "Religious Development between the Old and the New Testaments," p. 85.

as the heir of eternal life in the eternal, heavenly kingdom of God. Often, though not always, the individual in the mind of the writer was the devout Jew. Apostates and heathen were worthy victims of everlasting torment. The doctrine of the love of God was not carried to its inevitable conclusions.

But as we turn from this literature, which did not find its way into our Bible, but which profoundly influenced the writers of the New Testament and the Christians of the early centuries, we may pause to listen to these words of the "Book of Enoch":

"For that Son of Man has appeared,
And seated himself on the throne of his glory,
And all evil shall pass away before his face,
And the word of that Son of Man shall go forth
And be strong before the Lord of Spirits."

Twenty-third Week, Seventh Day.

3. The Wisdom of Solomon

As the last century before Christ brought no fulfilment of prophetic hopes, as Rome with law and legions succeeded Greece with her culture, multitudes must have thought the visions of the apocalyptic writers purely visionary, must have shared the skepticism and the hopelessness of Ecclesiastes. But from this last century before Christ comes a stirring voice of protest against the skepticism, materialism, and even idolatry, which threatened to strangle the Jewish faith. The peril was felt very keenly in Egypt, where a brutal persecution had arisen. The writer living in Egypt would bring to us, as over against the false attitude of Ecclesiastes, the true wisdom of Solomon.

He hears the wicked say:

"Short and sorrowful is our life.
And there is no remedy when a man cometh to his end,
And none was ever known that returned from Hades.
Because by mere chance were we born,
And hereafter we shall be as though we had never been.

Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that now are;
And let us use creation with all earnestness as youth's possession.
Let us fill ourselves with costly wines and perfumes;
And let no flower of spring pass us by.
Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they wither,
And let there be no meadow without traces of our proud revelry."[6]

But he reminds the wicked and the friends of God alike that the ungodly shall come,

"When their sins are reckoned up, with coward fear;
And their lawless deeds shall convict them to their face."

On the other hand there are "wages of holiness," and "a prize for blameless souls."

"The righteous live forever,
And in the Lord is their reward,
And the care of them with the Most High;
Therefore shall they receive the crown of royal dignity,
And the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand;
Because with his right hand shall he cover them,
And with his arm shall he shield them."

Thus did the writer face the enemies of his faith, sure that as God dooms the wrong he loves and lifts the right.

Conclusion

The story of the earlier Maccabees is one of almost unmatched heroism. The later history of the family is sordid and tawdry. But the old heroism of faith did not die out of Israel in the days of misery.

"Life may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to Truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is Fate."

[6] W. O. E. Oesterley, "The Books of the Apocrypha," p. 470.

This loyalty the writers of our period knew. In their assurance of an after-life of reward and retribution, in their conviction of a heavenly kingdom ever hovering above the kingdoms of the world, in their certainty of the priceless value of the individual, they helped to prepare the way of their unknown Lord and to make his paths straight.

> "Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by."

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What would you expect the influence of a brutal, Hellenizing king to be upon the various elements of Jewish life?
2. How was the book of Daniel calculated to oppose successfully the Hellenizing work of Antiochus IV?
3. Would you expect apocalyptic writings to perform any permanent and valuable service?
4. A while ago a man distributed a pamphlet, with this heading, "Doom, Doom, Doom. New York City to Be Destroyed." Why were not people interested and influenced by the message?
5. The hope of a blessed immortality flamed into glorious conviction in the times when the Jews were at the lowest depths of misery. How would you account for the fact?
6. Emerson said of the English, "They see most clearly on a cloudy day." Would you think that this optimism in a dark environment was due to faith or to temperament?
7. If you had been a Jew in the days of Antiochus, would you have joined in the celebration of the feast of Bacchus, or would you have tried to escape to Judas Maccabeus? Account for your answer.
8. If you regarded a law—for instance, that of Sabbath observance—as divinely imposed, would you think that you might break it in order to save your life or your country?

CHAPTER XIV

Songs of the Centuries

Introductory

Twenty-fourth Week, First Day.

If one would understand the religious life of America today, one would go first not to the books of theology or to the sermons of great present-day preachers. He might go first to the personal correspondence of our period. Failing that, he would turn to the hymns which no compiler of a hymn book would dare to omit: for example, "My faith looks up to Thee," "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord," "The Son of God goes forth to war," "O Master, let me walk with Thee." He could not invariably prove that the theology or the imagery of the hymns expresses the actual religious thought of our time; but he could be sure that these hymns express the loftiest religious convictions, experiences, aspirations, hopes of the American people of our time.

If one would understand the actual religious life of the Jewish community at its best, one must turn, not to the law, nor to the prophets, nor to the sages, but to the Psalms.

One has said, "The Psalms are the real heart of the Old Testament."

And another adds, "The Psalter through the centuries has been and will ever continue to be the one unique, inexhaustible treasury of devotion for the church and for the individual."

How wonderful it is that when a man or a church wishes to express the supreme desires and devotions of life, the language is almost invariably that of the Psalms—a little book written in a tiny province of a great empire, by men

long dead, in a language now "dead." When the religious musician would marry his own noblest music to the noblest words, it is noteworthy that he almost always chooses the words from the Psalter.

In the hours of their loftiest exaltation and of their deepest grief, earth's noblemen have found inspiration in the Psalms. "What a wonderful story they could tell, if we could gather it all from lonely chambers, from suffering sick-beds, from the brink of the valley of the shadow of death, from scaffolds and from fiery piles!" The Psalms are "the perfection of lyric poetry"; but this would not immortalize them. "The hopes and fears of all the years," the faith which is the victory overcoming the world, find in the Psalms their great literary expression. And we have made no adequate study of the Psalms until we have studied their achievements in subsequent history. More than any other pre-Christian literature they have helped men to beat to death the devils of doubt and discouragement, to rise triumphant over pain and poverty and death. They have helped to keep alive in the world the consciousness of the presence of God in nature, in history, and in personal life, even

> "When the sky which noticed all makes no disclosure,
> And the earth keeps up her terrible composure."

In the Psalms, as in a sanctuary, one learns, understands, and trusts.

Twenty-fourth Week, Second Day.

The book of Psalms, as we now have it, is made up of collections compiled at various times in the course of the centuries. The titles and circumstances assigned by the Psalter itself to some of the Psalms indicate an early tradition of no special value. "It cannot certainly be proved that David wrote any Psalms; the probability is that he wrote many. It is not likely that all of these are lost." Some Psalms definitely refer to situations which did not exist in

the Davidic days. As shrewd sayings were assigned to Solomon, so the songs were given the name of the sweet singer of Israel (Cf. p. 432).

We will not use the Psalms to illustrate the religious thinking of different periods. Some writers would throw many of the Psalms into the age of the Maccabees; others would date many of them in the days of the pre-exilic monarchy. Of course Psalms which speak of exile, and of the ruined and profaned temple, must be pushed down into the Babylonian, the Persian, or perhaps sometimes into the Maccabean period. Psalms which glory in the Law, and in the Messiah, are almost certainly not the product of the life before the Exile. Psalms which speak of God as the king of all the earth, which dwell upon the transfiguration of nature, which speak, though in uncertain tones, of a faith in immortality—these are almost surely post-exilic. It is probable that most of the Psalms were written before the end of the Persian period. But in this closing chapter we will not attempt to decide questions of dates. We prefer to enjoy the language, the thought, the faith of the Psalms.

Twenty-fourth Week, Third Day.

In Hebrew poetry the lines are characterized by tones or beats recurring with a certain regularity, but usually also by what is called parallelism. In synonymous parallelism, practically the same idea is expressed in consecutive lines:

Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.—Psalm 2:3.

In antithetic parallelism, consecutive lines express a contrast:

For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.—Psalm 1:6.

or

A soft answer turneth away wrath;
But a grievous word stirreth up anger.—Prov. 15:1.

In synthetic parallelism, the second line "in different ways supplements or completes" the thought:

> In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee;
> For thou wilt answer me.—Psalm 86:7.

Of the original couplet there are all sorts of expansion. Now we have the triplet, now the quatrain; out of this grows the stanza or strophe.

Sometimes the strophe is bounded by some great sentence, for example:

> O Jehovah, our Lord,
> How excellent is thy name in all the earth!
> —Psalm 8:1, 9.

Sometimes the stanza begins with a question, the question is answered, and the last line gathers up the whole thought into itself, as:

> Who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? . . .
> He that doeth these things shall never be moved.
> —Psalm 15.

The antistrophic structure is common. Thus one stanza reveals one aspect of truth, the second its complementary aspect. Sometimes the Psalms, like other poems of the Old Testament, are acrostic; for example, Psalm 119. In such Psalms, we have sometimes both lines of one couplet introduced by the same letter of the alphabet, and sometimes as many as eight lines so introduced.

Our present book of Psalms is divided into five books, possibly to correspond with the five books of the Pentateuch.

"Speaking broadly and generally," the Psalms of Book I (1-41) are *personal;* those of Books II and III (42-72 and 73-89) are *national;* and those of Books IV and V (90-106 and 107-130) are *liturgical,* pertaining primarily to public worship.[1]

We must remember that often when the Psalm uses the

[1] See H. B. D., Psalms.

word "I" the writer speaks for the community rather than for the individual.

Twenty-fourth Week, Fourth Day.

1. BOOK I: DUTY, DANGER, AND THE GREAT DELIVERER

Read, in addition to the Psalms discussed in text, Psalms 24, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, and 37—revelations of the heart of the religious Hebrew, and songs which have spoken and still speak their messages to religious men.

In Book I (1-41) the psalmists speak now apparently for themselves, and now for Israel. They are frequently in the presence of their enemies, but they are also in the presence of Jehovah, a God who makes all things—even the wrath of men—to serve the highest interests of his friends. The title suggested inadequately expresses the thought of many of these Psalms. The thought of the book is crystallized in words which may serve as its motto:

I waited patiently for Jehovah;
And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay;
And he set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:
Many shall see it, and fear,
And shall trust in Jehovah.—Psalm 40: 1-3.

We select certain typical Psalms, which may lead to further personal study:

Psalm 1 describes the happy man. He neither *walks* in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *stands* in the way of sinners, nor *sits* in the seat of the scoffers. Rather, he delights in and meditates on the law of Jehovah, the Mosaic Law, which in the later days became to the Jew the treasure-house of all truth, of all religion.

Passing to Psalm 4, we have an evening prayer. The writer

is surrounded by enemies. He quiets himself by meditation, sacrifice, and trust. Gladness follows gloom, peace comes in the sleep which God gives and guards. We read that as Luther prepared for death, he found the last verse of this Psalm becoming more dear to him:

> In peace will I both lay me down and sleep;
> For thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety.
> —Psalm 4:8.

Psalm 5 is a morning hymn. From its third verse the Young Men's Christian Association got the motto for its "Morning Watch":

> O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice;
> In the morning will I order my prayer unto thee, and will keep watch.

May we add three quotations?

"The desire to pray is prophetic of a heavenly Friend."
"The conscious person is continuous with a wider self, through which saving experience comes."
"Prayer opens a door into a larger life."

Psalm 8 has been finely styled, "Man, the Viceroy of God."

> O Jehovah, our Lord,
> How excellent is thy name in all the earth,
> Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens!
> Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,
> Because of thine adversaries,
> That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
> When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
> The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
> What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
> For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
> And crownest him with glory and honor.
> Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
> Thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
O Jehovah, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!—Psalm 8.

The psalmist considers the excellence of the character of God as revealed in the heavens, and thinks of the lips of childhood which can silence Jehovah's adversaries; he marvels at the littleness and the greatness of Man: Man, who seems to be the creature of a day, God has appointed ruler over all His creation, made him indeed but a little lower than God himself.

The great enemy which keeps a man from his regal character is fear. Psalm 11 deals with the Conquest of Fear. The foundations reel. What can the righteous do? God's in his heaven. The wicked shall perish. "The upright shall behold his face." Mary Queen of Scots was no plaster saint, but she did not lack courage. We are told that as she went to the block, she drove fear from her heart by repeating this Psalm.

Twenty-fourth Week, Fifth Day.

As we ask the qualities of the man worthy to be God's viceroy, we find one answer in Psalm 15, entitled "The Guest of God." Nothing is said of this man's observance of ritual; much is said of his daily conduct:

He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart;
He that slandereth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his friend,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;
In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,
But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
He that putteth not out his money to interest,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.—Psalm 15: 2-5.

To the psalmist God's holy hill was very dear, more dear than to the great prophets Amos and Isaiah. But he knows, as did they, that character, not ceremony, gives a man standing with God.

Passing for the moment Psalm 16 (see p. 505), we turn to Psalm 18, which has been frequently attributed by scholars to David. It is a glorious Psalm, but it reveals a self-complacency in God's man, the regal man, which is quite characteristic of the earlier piety but is alien to the prophet who said that God dwells with him who is of a humble and a contrite spirit. The psalmist has been down in the lowest depths.

> The cords of Sheol were round about me;
> The snares of death came upon me (verse 5).

In answer to the psalmist's prayer, Jehovah descended, the earth trembled, he bowed the heavens and came down;

> And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly;
> Yea, he soared upon the wings of the wind (verse 10).

The foundations of the world were laid bare, and all for the sake of Jehovah's loved one.

> He sent from on high, he took me;
> He drew me out of many waters (verse 16).

Now why does Jehovah startle and shake the very universe?

> He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
> Jehovah hath rewarded me according to my righteousness;
> According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me (verses 19, 20).

The man was perfect with God, kept himself from iniquity, and according to the cleanness of his hands in Jehovah's eyesight, Jehovah paid him. The writer, speaking for his people, talks of pursuing, overtaking, smiting the enemy. He has had a tremendous and true experience of divine deliverance. But he has never seen God as Isaiah saw him; nor is he able

to look into the face of the Christ who should come, in whose presence a man's one word is this: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

As we ask of the life experiences of those who are worthy to be viceroys of God, guests of God, we come upon Psalm 22.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou answerest not;
And in the night season, and am not silent.
But thou art holy,
O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
Our fathers trusted in thee:
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee, and were delivered:
They trusted in thee, and were not put to shame.
But I am a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
Commit thyself unto Jehovah; let him deliver him:
Let him rescue him, seeing he delighteth in him.
But thou art he that took me out of the womb;
Thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts.
I was cast upon thee from the womb;
Thou art my God since my mother bare me.
Be not far from me; for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.
Many bulls have compassed me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
They gape upon me with their mouth,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.
I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint:
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.
For dogs have compassed me:
A company of evil-doers have inclosed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.

I may count all my bones.
They look and stare upon me;
They part my garments among them,
And upon my vesture do they cast lots.
But be not thou far off, O Jehovah:
O thou my succor, haste thee to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword,
My darling from the power of the dog.
Save me from the lion's mouth;
Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me.—Psalm *22*: 1-21.

The Psalm is of peculiar interest, because "it is one of the most magnificent of the dramatic odes," and also because it was used by Jesus among his last words on the cross. The writer, speaking for himself or for pious Israel, is crushed by the enemy. They despise him, deride him, part his vesture among them, like dogs "dig out" as it were his very hands and feet. But, worst of all, God who used to care and answer —"my God"—has apparently forsaken him; when suddenly, just as the universe joins to crush him, deliverance comes: "Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me." Then[2] the whole world comes round to his side. His song of personal thanksgiving is taken up by the nations, and the generations to come shall hear and wonder and praise.

Just how did deliverance come to the psalmist? Was it a deliverance of the spirit in the midst of material defeat? Probably not; but this is the kind of deliverance God's people have often known. At the stake John Huss declared: "God is my witness that I have never taught or preached that which false witnesses have testified against me. He knows that the great object of all my preaching has been to convert men from sin. In the truth of that Gospel, which hitherto I have written, taught, and preached, I now joyfully die." This "pale, thin man in mean attire" dies singing, with voice half stifled by the smoke, "Kyrie Eleison." When Jesus upon the cross repeated the words of the Psalm as expressing his sense of God-desertion, or as his comfort in the midst of

[2] Verses 22–31 may have been originally a separate psalm.

agony, God did not rescue him *from* the horns of the wild oxen, but he answered him and saved him. Browning's tyrant speaks:

"So, I soberly laid my last plan
To extinguish the man.
Round his creep-hole, with never a break
Ran my fires for his sake;
Over-head, did my thunder combine
With my underground mine:
Till I looked from my labour content
To enjoy the event.

When sudden . . . how think ye, the end?
Did I say, 'without friend'?
Say rather, from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an Arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast
Where the wretch was safe prest!
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
—So, *I* was afraid!"

Twenty-fourth Week, Sixth Day.

Read, in addition to Psalms discussed, Psalms 42, 43, 48, 56, 61, 67, 69, noting old and new emphases of religious thought.

As we study Psalms 42 to 72, we note that the accent of thought falls more definitely upon the nation than upon the individual. No title may satisfactorily cover all the messages of the thirty-one Psalms. This thought, however, recurs again and again and may well serve as the title of

2. Book II: God the Righteous and Almighty, the Refuge of His People

As the motto of the book, we may choose this:

God hath spoken once,
Twice have I heard this,
That power belongeth unto God.

Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth lovingkindness;
For thou renderest to every man according to his work.
—Psalm 62: 11, 12.

The psalmists glory in the thought of God as the God of nature,

Who by his strength setteth fast the mountains,
Being girded about with might:
Who stilleth the roaring of the seas,
The roaring of their waves,
And the tumult of the peoples.
They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens:
Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.
Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,
Thou greatly enrichest it;
The river of God is full of water:
Thou providest them grain, when thou hast so prepared the earth.
Thou waterest its furrows abundantly;
Thou settlest the ridges thereof:
Thou makest it soft with showers;
Thou blessest the springing thereof.
Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
And thy paths drop fatness.
They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness;
And the hills are girded with joy.
The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered over with grain;
They shout for joy, they also sing.—Psalm 65: 6-13.

They have no sympathy with that ancient, and very modern, thought of "a finite God, over against huge semi-evil or aimless cosmic forces."

To them God is, as well, the God of nations.

For Jehovah Most High is terrible;
He is a great King over all the earth.
He subdueth peoples under us,
And nations under our feet.
He chooseth our inheritance for us,
The glory of Jacob whom he loved.

God is gone up with a shout,
Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises:
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth:
Sing ye praises with understanding.
God reigneth over the nations:
God sitteth upon his holy throne.
The princes of the peoples are gathered together
To be the people of the God of Abraham;
For the shields of the earth belong unto God:
He is greatly exalted.—Psalm 47:2-9.

But God is also righteous; and a righteous God can be satisfied with nothing less than righteousness. The author of Psalm 51 has none of that self-complacency which we noted in Psalm 18:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness:
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions;
And my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight;
That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.
Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity;
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts;
And in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.
Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
—Psalm 51:1-7.

In some of the Psalms the authors and their companions are in great misery. Sometimes they are the victims of friends turned foes.

For it was not an enemy that reproached me;
Then I could have borne it:

Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me;
Then I would have hid myself from him:
But it was thou, a man mine equal,
My companion, and my familiar friend.
We took sweet counsel together;
We walked in the house of God with the throng.
—Psalm 55: 12-14.

Now they feel that God has cast them off.

Hast not thou, O God, cast us off?
And thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.
—Psalm 60: 10.

But not often does this mood prevail. As a rule, the Psalmists bid their friends to cast their burdens on Jehovah. He is their high tower, their strength, their salvation, their refuge. Death will be the shepherd of Israel's enemies, and God will root them out of the land of the living.

Among the noblest Psalms of Book II is Luther's favorite, the 46th. It seems to tell in a few verses the story of the book. God himself is a refuge in the earthquake and the flood. God's city is at peace in the midst of universal chaos. The barren highland-fortress city of Jerusalem is without a river. Oh, there is a river, the river of God's kindness and truth, whose streams make glad the city of God! God is engaged in a great war against war.

He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariots in the fire.
Be still, and know that I am God.—Psalm 46: 9, 10.

Thus with prophetic vision, this singer of a despised and hated people sees his God alone, without a rival, Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and King; yes, and also a very present help, an easily accessible help in trouble. He is an impregnable city, "that can be entered with a thought."

The faith of this man "is not the committing of one's thought in assent to any proposition, but the trusting of one's

being to a *being,* there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed forever."[3]

How languidly some men discuss religion, as if God were a kind of uniform to be worn or laid aside according to convenience or prevailing custom.

"God—Who believe in God?
Country folks who live beneath
The shadow of the steeple,
The parson and the parson's wife,
And mostly married people,
Youths green and happy in first love
So thankful for illusion,
And men caught out in what the world
Calls guilt in first confusion,
And almost everyone when age,
Disease, or sorrows strike him,
Inclines to think there is a God,
Or something very like him."

The strong and strength-giving men of the world long for a stronger One upon whose throne-steps they may kneel and bow obeisance, some Comrade, in whose companionship they may indeed be strong.

Twenty-fourth Week, Seventh Day.

3. Book III: Sorrow, Memory, and Hope

Read without fail the complete Psalms from which quotations have been made, and also Psalms 76 and 82, inquiring as to the source of the psalmist's solemn trust in God.

In Psalms 73 to 89 the thought of the psalmist is still primarily upon the holy nation, or the holy city, and its God. As motto for the book we may read:

Will the Lord cast off for ever?
And will he be favorable no more?
Is his lovingkindness clean gone for ever?
Doth his promise fail for evermore?

[3] Horace Bushnell, quoted by E. W. Lyman, "The Experience of God in Modern Life," p. 19.

Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?
And I said, This is my infirmity;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the
Most High.
I will make mention of the deeds of Jehovah;
For I will remember thy wonders of old.
I will meditate also upon all thy work,
And muse on thy doings.
Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary:
Who is a great god like unto God?—Psalm 77:7-13.

In most of the Psalms of this group, the city of God is in dire distress; now enemies have set the sanctuary on fire, profaned the dwelling-place of God's name, burned up all the places of assembly of God in the land; or again, the heathen have laid Jerusalem in heaps, and the blood of God's servants has been shed like water round about Jerusalem (Psalms 74 and 79). In the present wretchedness, history comes to comfort the faithful. So the sweet singers go back to the days of old, the years in which God saved, guided, strengthened his people. Surely experience may vindicate faith. Now they plead with their companions of the sorrowful way to hearken unto their God. Again, very boldly they plead with God himself. "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause" (74:22, Cf. 79:10). And entreaty again and again swings into a beautiful hope.

Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
Truth springeth out of the earth;
And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.
Yea, Jehovah will give that which is good;
And our land shall yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before him,
And shall make his footsteps a way to walk in.
—Psalm 85:10-13.

In all of the Psalms of this group, the temple is the place of Jehovah's self-revelation. "His way is in the sanctuary."

The mystery of suffering innocence was too great until in the sanctuary the truth became clear:

Until I went into the sanctuary of God,
And considered their latter end.
Surely thou settest them in slippery places:
Thou castest them down to destruction.
How are they become a desolation in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
As a dream when one awaketh,
So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou wilt despise their image.—Psalm 73: 17-20.[4]

With exquisite beauty the writer of Psalm 84 describes the meaning of the temple to him.

How amiable are thy tabernacles,
O Jehovah of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.
Yea, the sparrow hath found her a house,
And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,
Even thine altars, O Jehovah of hosts,
My King, and my God.
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house:
They will be still praising thee.
Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;
In whose heart are the highways to Zion.
Passing through the valley of Weeping they make it a place of springs;
Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from strength to strength;
Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.
—Psalm 84: 1-7.

He thinks of himself as an exile from the holy city, and congratulates the very sparrow and swallow that have found lodging there, by the altars. Then he thinks of those who like himself are striving to reach the city—often hindered, often diverted—in their hearts the highways to Zion. And he counts those blessed whose heart highways lead, not to

[4] For further discussion, see p. 506.

Tyre, nor yet to Egypt, but to Zion. For these the valley of weeping becomes a place of springs. These pass from stronghold to stronghold. Everyone of these appeareth at last before God in Zion. "Blessed are the homesick, for they shall reach home." At last their feet shall press the steps of the temple to which they have long been journeying by the pilgrim paths of the heart. At last experience shall catch up with aspiration, at last ideal and fact shall be one.

Twenty-fifth Week, First Day.

Read the noble Psalms from which quotations have been made, and also Psalms 95, 96, and 100, with their indomitable "conviction of things unseen."

4. Book IV: Jehovah's Reign, the World's Rejoicing

With the fourth book (90 to 106), we come to Psalms which are thought to have been written especially for the temple service.

As motto for the book, we suggest:

> Jehovah reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
> Let the multitude of isles be glad.
> Clouds and darkness are round about him:
> Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.—Psalm 97: 1, 2.

Psalms 90 and 91 are among the most majestic expressions of religion to be found in literature. God has been the dwelling-place of his people in all generations; and the man who dwells in the secret place of the Most High is absolutely safe.

In this group of Psalms again, God is the God of all nature, and the 104th Psalm sings gloriously to Jehovah, the mighty God:

> Thou art clothed with honor and majesty:
> Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment;

Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain;
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;
Who maketh the clouds his chariot;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind;
Who maketh winds his messengers;
Flames of fire his ministers;
Who laid the foundations of the earth,
That it should not be moved for ever.
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture;
The waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away
(The mountains rose, the valleys sank down)
Unto the place which thou hadst founded for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over;
That they turn not again to cover the earth.

—Psalm 104: 1-9.

But the psalmists find their supreme happiness in the thought that the God who is Israel's home, and nature's creator and ruler, is a God of character. One beautifully says: "I will sing of lovingkindness and justice" (101: 1).

In Psalm 103 we have a wonderful characterization of God:

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies . . .
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Like as a father pitieth his children,
So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.
As for man, his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.

But the lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting
to everlasting upon them that fear him,
And his righteousness unto children's children.
—Psalm 103: 3, 4, 10-17.

To this man, how remote are all those struggles between the priests of the calves of Bethel, and Amos the prophet of Tekoa. How remote are those old quarrels between Jehu and the Tyrian baal. One thinks of Mrs. Browning:

"Jove, that right hand is unloaded,
Whence the thunder did prevail,
While in idiocy of godhead
Thou art staring the stars pale!
And thine eagle, blind and old,
Roughs his feathers in the cold,
Pan, Pan is dead. . . .

Gods bereaved, gods belated,
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top—
Now, Pan is dead."

After reading this book, a man turns back to underscore with new appreciation the words of one of the greatest of its verses:

Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.—Psalm 97: 11.

Whence came the author's conception of such a God? Do you suppose that there was no Reality producing within him that "reality sense," which in turn transfigured his life, and made him one of the creators of the moral world in which we live?

Twenty-fifth Week, Second Day.

5. Book V: Triumph through Trust.

Read the complete Psalms from which quotations have been

made, also Psalms 112, 114, 116, 118, 145, 146, and 148, asking whether, in the midst of personal or social sorrow, we still have the right to trust and triumph. Have we a right to radiant faces and lives?

The fifth Book (107 to 150) is itself composed of several earlier collections of songs, of all of which the words of Psalm 125:1, 2 may serve as motto:

> They that trust in Jehovah
> Are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth
> for ever.
> As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
> So Jehovah is round about his people
> From this time forth and for evermore.

In most of these Psalms the singers praise the God who has made nature and history to serve his beloved people. . .

> Oh that men would praise Jehovah for his lovingkindness,
> And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
> For he hath broken the gates of brass,
> And cut the bars of iron in sunder.
> —Psalm 107:15, 16 (*Cf.* Psalm 114 and others).

When there is such a God in the universe, how silly is all idol worship!

> Their idols are silver and gold,
> The work of men's hands.
> They have mouths, but they speak not;
> Eyes have they, but they see not;
> They have ears, but they hear not;
> Noses have they, but they smell not;
> They have hands, but they handle not;
> Feet have they, but they walk not;
> Neither speak they through their throat.
> They that make them shall be like unto them;
> Yea, every one that trusteth in them.
> O Israel, trust thou in Jehovah:
> He is their help and their shield.—Psalm 115:4-9.

Was this solemn confidence in Jehovah an easy achievement

of the soul? Had not the idols been the victors? At what period had Jehovah-worship ever really "paid" Israel?

Psalm 119 is "the most artificial of the Psalms. It is composed of twenty-two alphabetical strophes, in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. Each strophe has eight lines, each line beginning with the letter characteristic of the strophe." The author is apparently one of the earlier and nobler legalists, to whom the Law was a delight. Indeed the Law seems almost to have taken the place of God in his thought. He and his friends are persecuted for their adherence to the Law, but in the Law they triumph. As upon the strings of a golden harp he plays upon the words, Law, Testimonies, Ordinances, Precepts, Statutes, Commandments, Judgments, "Thy Word." The open secret of the singer's life is this: "And I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought thy precepts" (119:45).

> Let thy lovingkindnesses also come unto me, O Jehovah,
> Even thy salvation, according to thy word.
> So shall I have an answer for him that reproacheth me;
> For I trust in thy word.
> And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth;
> For I have hoped in thine ordinances.
> So shall I observe thy law continually
> For ever and ever.
> And I shall walk at liberty;
> For I have sought thy precepts.
> I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings,
> And shall not be put to shame.
> And I will delight myself in thy commandments,
> Which I have loved.
> I will lift up my hands also unto thy commandments, which I have loved;
> And I will meditate on thy statutes.—Psalm 119:41-48.

When Edison was perfecting the phonograph, he is said to have found it hard to get a clear reproduction of the letter *s*. He would send into his instrument the word *specia*, and it would come back *pecia*. And hour after hour, day after day, the wizard worked—why? In order to find the

law, in obedience to which he might gain *liberty.* How striking is the expression in the epistle of James, "the law of liberty." He has learned how to live who has learned, not as a theory but as a working principle, that perfect obedience to a perfect law is perfect liberty.

Twenty-fifth Week, Third Day.

The fifteen Psalms at the heart of the fifth book, namely, 120 to 134, are called Pilgrim Songs, or Songs of Ascents. They were apparently sung by the pilgrims in connection with the great festivals. In Psalm 120 the singer is in a land remote from Zion, dwelling among the treacherous.

I am for peace:
But when I speak, they are for war.—Psalm 120:7.

In Psalm 121 the pilgrim looks toward the sacred mountain, that he may find help from his sleepless guardian God. In Psalm 122 the pilgrim is in the holy city itself. "Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem"; and then the psalm breaks forth into a beautiful prayer for the peace of the holy city.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
And prosperity within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions' sakes,
I will now say, Peace be within thee.
For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God
I will seek thy good.—Psalm 122:6-9.

In Psalm 126 we have a song of joy in renewed prosperity, and return to Zion:

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.—Psalm 126:5, 6.

Among these pilgrim songs are those of the family life, about which through the centuries much of the best in Israel's religion centered (127, 128). The songs reveal the heart of the religious man of later Judaism. He has no pride of virtue:

> If thou, Jehovah, shouldest mark iniquities,
> O Lord, who could stand?—Psalm 130:3.

He has no pride of intellect or of political achievement:

> Jehovah, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;
> Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
> Or in things too wonderful for me.
> Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul;
> Like a weaned child with his mother,
> Like a weaned child is my soul within me.
> —Psalm 131:1, 2.

But he believes, and no man can shake his belief, that Jehovah, his God, made the heaven and the earth and that he is the child of the great King. And his enemies are as dogs that bark at the prince who rides in the king's triumph-train.

From a verse of one of these pilgrim songs, was framed the cablegram announcing the escape of missionaries and soldiers from the British Legation at the time of the Boxer outbreak in China in 1900:

> Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
> The snare is broken, and we are escaped.—Psalm 124:7.

Twenty-fifth Week, Fourth Day.

Passing from the Pilgrim Songs, one notes with special sympathy the Song of the Exiles, who sat down by the canals of Babylon and wept as they remembered Zion, whose captors asked them to sing them one of the songs of the homeland of their souls.

> How shall we sing Jehovah's song
> In a foreign land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.—Psalm 137: 4-6.

We linger most willingly and wonderingly upon the study of Psalm 139, which, joined with Psalm 103, gives to us perhaps the noblest conception of God ever cherished by the Hebrew heart before the days of Jesus.

O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before,
And laid thy hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
And the light about me shall be night;
Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
For thou didst form my inward parts:
Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb.
I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
Wonderful are thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right well.
My frame was not hidden from thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance;
And in thy book they were all written,
Even the days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was none of them.
How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they are more in number than
the sand:
When I awake, I am still with thee.—Psalm 139: 1-18.

Ruskin was bidden as a child to learn this Psalm by heart; Webster quoted from it in one of his great appeals. There is no escape for the psalmist from his God. Flight to heaven or to Sheol, the aid of the wings of the morning, and the journey to the uttermost parts of the sea, avail nothing. Wherever he flees, he finds God already there. The darkness offers no protection from God. "When I awake, I am still with thee."

"I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after."
—Francis Thompson, "The Hound of Heaven."

But this God who is everywhere knows everything. There is not a word, not a thought of the psalmist, but God knows it. It is true: "There is no escape from God, but unto him."

But why should one wish to escape from God? For he who sees all, who knows all, has made all; and the psalmist knows, as Job came to know, that the God who formed him so wonderfully, must love and care.

"Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'"

Perhaps our own strong and gentle poetess, Harriet Beecher Stowe, has best understood the message of this so noble psalm:

"Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee! . . .

So shall it be at last, in that bright morning,
When the soul waketh, and life's shadows flee;
O in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with Thee!"

Did any of the psalmists get so close to Jesus as to gain this vision of immortality? We shall see (p. 504ff.).

Twenty-fifth Week, Fifth Day.

As we review the Psalms, do we find the old emphases of thought, with which our studies have made us familiar? In some of the Psalms there is the utmost delight in the sanctuary and its ritual.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.—Psalm 84: 10.

The yoke of the Law lays no heavy burden on the psalmists. Rather it helps marvelously in the drawing of the heavy loads of life.

The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever:
The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping them there is great reward.—Psalm 19:7-11.

The psalmists have all moved worlds away from the early popular thought which identified religion with ceremonial. In the ancient temple, performing the well-loved services of the sanctuary, they found a most precious experience with God. Ralph Waldo Emerson was no hide-bound ecclesiastic, but he wrote words which echo the satisfaction of the Psalmist in the sanctuary:

"We love the venerable house
Our fathers built to God;
In heaven are kept their grateful vows,
Their dust endears the sod.

Here holy thoughts a light have shed
From many a radiant face,
And prayers of tender hope have spread
A perfume through the place.

And anxious hearts have pondered here
The mystery of life,
And prayed the Eternal Spirit clear
Their doubts and aid their strife.

From humble tenements around
Came up the pensive train,
And in the church a blessing found,
Which filled their homes again.

They live with God, their homes are dust;
But here their children pray,
And, in this fleeting lifetime, trust
To find the narrow way."
—"The House Our Fathers Built to God."

In some of the Psalms there is a subordination, even a rejection, of sacrifice, which reminds one of the greatest of the prophets.

In Psalm 40, in the midst of prayer and praise, occur these words:

Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;
Mine ears hast thou opened:
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.
Then said I, Lo, I am come;
In the roll of the book it is written of me:
I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy law is within my heart.—Psalm 40:6-8.

In the great Psalm of confession, we have words even more radical:

For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—Psalm 51:16, 17.

Yet more amazing is the thought of the divine dismissal of sacrifice as absurd, a thought expressed in Psalm 50:

I will take no bullock out of thy house,
Nor he-goats out of thy folds.
For every beast of the forest is mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
I know all the birds of the mountains;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee;
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
Or drink the blood of goats?
Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving;
And pay thy vows unto the Most High;
And call upon me in the day of trouble:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.
—Psalm 50:9-15.

God is not hungry, that he needs to be fed.

Remember the horror of Joel when, on account of the locusts and the drought, some of the offerings of the temple had to be omitted. Remember how the Jewish world stood aghast when, in the days of Antiochus IV, the burnt-offerings ceased and the heathen profaned the temple. Remember that when Pompey entered the city and broke into the temple

itself, he found to his amazement priests performing still their orderly sacrifices, while their brother-priests were being slain. Recall the word of Josephus that in no siege of Jerusalem before the last had there been any interruption of the daily sacrifice, but that when this occurred, A. D. 70, it made an awful impression upon Jew and heathen alike. The marvel is that the sacrificial system did not bury such Psalms as these in oblivion, or that these Psalms did not kill the system. The Psalms of ceremonial and the Psalms which practically reject ritual have been preserved, and, with fine religious sanity, have been brought together to help us in the fashioning of our religion and its fitting garments.

Twenty-fifth Week, Sixth Day.

What of the attitude of the psalmists toward foreign nations? We must confess that usually the psalmists share with most of the post-exilic prophecies a vindictive hatred toward their enemies, the foreigners.

O my God, make them like the whirling dust;
As stubble before the wind.—Psalm 83: 13.

Let burning coals fall upon them:
Let them be cast into the fire,
Into deep pits, whence they shall not rise.
—Psalm 140: 10.

O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
Against the rock.—Psalm 137: 8, 9.

Of these imprecatory Psalms, we may say briefly that:

a. The morality of the Old Testament is confessedly lower than that of the New.

b. These imprecations are not in the spirit of the noblest Old Testament prophets or singers.

c. The psalmist who thus calls down curses upon his enemy

is thinking, not of himself, but of the covenant people of Jehovah. His enemy is not *his* enemy, but the enemy of Israel, and therefore of Israel's God.

For they speak against thee wickedly,
And thine enemies take thy name in vain.
Do not I hate them, O Jehovah, that hate thee?
And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
I hate them with perfect hatred:
They are become mine enemies.—Psalm 139: 20-22.

d. The writers were certainly, as a rule, ignorant of the future life. To maintain their fundamental faith in the justice of God they must hold, and indeed desire, the punishment of the wicked in this life.

e. The second decade of the twentieth century of the Christian era has been compelled to listen to not dissimilar imprecations of Christian people upon their enemies.

Twenty-fifth Week, Seventh Day.

From the sirocco temper of the imprecatory Psalms, we pass with wondering joy to the confident morning of Psalms which speak in prophetic spirit of generous welcome for the nations of the world.

Again and again a psalmist will call the nations of the world to praise Jehovah.

Oh praise Jehovah, all ye nations;
Laud him, all ye peoples.
For his lovingkindness is great toward us;
And the truth of Jehovah endureth for ever.
Praise ye Jehovah.—Psalm 117: 1, 2.

Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth;
Oh sing praises unto the Lord.—Psalm 68: 32.

Again, one sees the procession of hitherto "heathen" princes making their pilgrim way to Jerusalem; or Ethiopia calling to Jehovah.

Because of thy temple at Jerusalem
Kings shall bring presents unto thee. . . .
Princes shall come out of Egypt;
Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands unto God.
—Psalm 68: 29, 31.

In Psalm 87 we come to a crowning evidence of a psalmist's generous, God-illumined vision.

Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O city of God.
I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as among them that know me:
Behold, Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
This one was born there.
Yea, of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one was born in her;
And the Most High himself will establish her.
Jehovah will count, when he writeth up the peoples,
This one was born there.—Psalm 87: 3-6.

Rahab—lying, deceptive, alluring, monstrous Egypt; Babylon—slayer of nations and destroyer of temples; Tyre—trader in merchandise and in the souls of men; Philistia, typical heathen neighbor and adversary: all these are mentioned when Jehovah calls the roll of citizens of Jerusalem. "And Zion I will name: Mother."[5]

One has said of this passage: "In its breadth of view and fulness of Messianic hope, it vies with the greatest of prophetic utterances." Here indeed Zion is "the Mother of the Nations." No hand of man, the hand of God himself, drew aside the veil to permit the psalmist to see that vision.

Twenty-sixth Week, First Day.

Do any of the Psalms give us a glimpse of a heaven-appointed and anointed king, who shall mediate the rule of Jehovah?

In Psalm 2 we have a picture of Jehovah's Anointed, who

[5] Probable translation of verse 5a.

sits upon God's holy hill of Zion and rules over rebellious, revolting nations, whose conspiracies all come to naught.

> Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
> Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
> —Psalm 2:9.

The only course for kings and rulers is to kiss the son, lest he be angry. "Blessed are all they that take refuge in him." This Psalm, while contemplating some known ruler, reaches out in thought to a world conquest never purposed or dreamed of by any king of Israel. Here, too, the function of the Anointed One is political rather than religious.

Psalm 72 gives us a beautiful picture of a king and his dominion. It "was originally a petition for a king on his ascending the throne." The words which are translated so that they predict the sovereign's wide rule of justice and kindness are probably prayers, as, for example, in verse 15: "May he live, and may there be given him of the gold of Sheba."[6] The rabbis regarded the Psalm as Messianic, and the Christian Church early took it over into her life, and saw its ideal filled full in Jesus. The Psalm was read on the day of the Epiphany, when the visit of the Wise Men to the infant Saviour was celebrated.

Psalm 89 dwells upon God's covenant with David that his seed should endure forever, and his throne as the sun.

Psalm 110 exalts apparently a reigning king, who is at the same time a priest.[7] With his army of volunteers he beats down his enemies and fills the places with dead bodies. Certainly by the time of Jesus the Psalm was regarded as reaching forward beyond any contemporary sovereign to the Messiah. When the Carpenter of Nazareth did not "strike through kings," or lay the axe to the root of the tree, John

[6] Int. Com. Psalms II, p. 131.

[7] This Psalm is now "referred by many of the ablest scholars to Maccabean times." It may have been "addressed to Simon the Maccabee, after he had been constituted 'ruler and high priest forever' by a decree of the nation in the year 142 B. C."—R. H. Charles, "Religious Development between the Old and the New Testaments," p. 78.

the Baptist questioned, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"

Twenty-sixth Week, Second Day.

While observing the familiar emphases in our psalmists, we hear in two or three of the Psalms a note seldom heard elsewhere in the Old Testament, the note of immortality.

In the Assyrian description of the afterworld, we have these words:

"The house of darkness,
The house men enter, but cannot depart from,
The road men go but cannot return.
The house from whose dwellers light is withdrawn,
The place where dust is their food, and their nourishment clay.
The light they behold not, in darkness they dwell,
They are clothed like birds, all fluttering wings.
On the door and the gateposts dust lieth thick."

In Isa. 38 we have a beautiful but pathetic song put into the lips of King Hezekiah, when he had recovered from illness. He will walk now as in solemn procession:

For Sheol cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day:
The father to the children shall make known thy truth.
—Isa. 38: 18, 19.

To the average Israelite of the earlier day Sheol was beyond the reach of God's control. We noted that Job got a glimpse of a return to life for vindication, but does not apparently grip the thought of immortality.

Ecclesiastes, as we have seen, thinks of immortality to dismiss it, almost with a sneer. As late as 175 B. C. Ben-Sira —shrewd, broad-minded, devout—saw his fellow-travelers on life's journey moving slowly or swiftly toward Sheol. While

he notices that the miserable long for Sheol, he cannot persuade us that there is much either desirable or endurable in the realm of the dead. And yet from Sheol there is no escape. Down to the time, then, of Ben-Sira himself a Jew could be deeply religious, true to the essential creed of the prophets and sages and psalmists, and still have no belief in the resurrection or in the life everlasting. A scholar reminds us of the ancient answer of the maiden to the Babylonish hero, Gilgamesh, who sought immortal life: "Why dost thou wander from place to place? The life which thou seekest thou wilt not find. When the gods created man, they fixed death for mankind. Life they kept in their own hands." The average Jewish worshiper of Old Testament times would have assented to that word, excepting its polytheism.

Twenty-sixth Week, Third Day.

The history of their nation, and their confidence in Jehovah, which failed not even when history seemed to jeer at it, led all men of prophetic spirit immediately after the Exile to believe in the unified, glorified Davidic kingdom on the earth. As the hope continued unrealized, it did not die, but was transfigured. There arose the belief that the earthly kingdom must be achieved by strictly supernatural power and be endued with many supernatural elements.

So small, however, was the remnant composing the Jewish state that it seemed incredible that they could ever achieve the glorious empire of the future. From the olden times had come down stories telling of men raised to life by contact with the living prophet, or even with the dead body of a prophet. Other stories told of great men who had evaded death altogether. The thought of national resurrection which Ezekiel had made a commonplace may have helped to furnish the language and foster the thought of individual resurrection. That the kingdom of the future may have a population worthy of its glory, the righteous men of the past must rise from the dead.

Still further, the fundamental proposition of the Hebrew faith was this: that Jehovah was strong and righteous. But multitudinous events in Hebrew history did seem to refute that faith. The assurance of life after death became increasingly essential to men who would at once hold their faith and face the facts.

A yet more important factor was helping men of purest religion to gain the hope of life everlasting. As they enjoyed the sublime and satisfying fellowship of God, they realized the hideous incongruity of the close of such fellowship. Shall a chance arrow, a fall, the sudden stopping of the heartbeat, lose to God's friend God's fellowship? That would be incongruous, absurd, incredible.

In our study of Daniel and the literature of the last two pre-Christian centuries, we have seen that the conviction of the resurrection and of the life after death became immensely influential. But down through the Greek period, the psalmists had little of previous teaching on immortality upon which to build their own hope.

In Isa. 26:19 we have the words: "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead." But many commentators believe that these words do not carry us beyond the thought of national resurrection.

A wonderful personal hope seems to find expression in Isa. 25:8a: "He hath swallowed up death forever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces." But, aside from the book of Daniel and the Psalms, these two passages are practically the only ones which express even dubiously a hope of permanent victory over death.

As we would expect, the usual view of the psalmists is that death introduces one to Sheol, where communion with Jehovah ends forever:

> For in death there is no remembrance of thee:
> In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?
> —Psalm 6:5 (*Cf.* 30:9).

I am reckoned with them that go down into the pit;
I am as a man that hath no help,
Cast off among the dead,
Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more,
And they are cut off from thy hand. . . .
Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?
Shall they that are deceased arise and praise thee?
Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?
Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
—Psalm 88: 4, 5, 10-12.

Twenty-sixth Week, Fourth Day.

There are some Psalms which wrest from death its victory, and take captivity captive. In Psalm 16 God's man finds his refuge in God. His friends are God's friends, his inheritance is God. Having God he has all things. The goal of his hope is life after death, in the presence of his God.

I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.
Thou wilt show me the path of life:
In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
—Psalm 16: 8-11.

In Psalm 49 the singer has been compassed by cunning foes, who trust in their wealth. But he is not anxious or afraid; and this for two reasons:

a. Not one of these rich men can save himself from death by giving a ransom to God.

"Surely no man can by any means redeem himself,
Or give to God the ransom he requires—
That he should live forevermore,
And not see the pit;
For too costly is the redemption of man's life,
And one must cease [from that effort] forever. . . .

The fool and the brutish perish together,
And leave their wealth to others.
The grave is their home forever. . . .
Though they called lands by their names."[8]

They had vast estates on which to perpetuate their names, but they will have each just six feet of earth in which to lie, above which their tombstones may be chiseled with those precious names of theirs.

b. While Death is the shepherd of the wicked, leading them to Sheol,

"Surely God will redeem my soul from the hand of Sheol,
For he will take me [to himself]."[9]

The psalmist believes what Job learned—that character has value in the eyes of God; but facts seem to contradict faith. Facts seem sometimes to jest with a righteous man, and to state very baldly that the wicked are prime favorites with God. The psalmist is not greatly concerned to see that his enemies suffer, or that he survives. He is concerned that his God, whom he has trusted, should not betray His own character, deny Himself. The hand which he has learned to lean upon he knows will rescue him from the realm of helpless shades, the fitting home of the wicked.

Twenty-sixth Week, Fifth Day.

In Psalm 73 the writer has faced with an open mind the lamentable inequalities of life, which had harassed the faith of Job. He realizes, however, that if he should talk in a skeptical vein, he would undermine the faith of his friends.

If I had said, I will speak thus;
Behold, I had dealt treacherously with the generation of thy children.—Psalm 73: 15.

At last faith triumphs. In the great sanctuary he sees that the wicked stand in slippery places.

[8] Translation by McFadyn.
[9] *Ibid.*

As a dream when one awaketh,
So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou wilt despise their image.—Psalm 73: 20.

But Job's three friends had seen as much as this. This man does more. Like Job himself, he comes through to God, takes God's hand in the darkness, is lifted up and strengthened. While Job contemplates a return to life simply for vindication, this man is conquered by the sublime conviction that God's love will not let him go. The man who has entered into vital and vitalizing communion with God is not going to be banished from him by the incident we call death. Rather he would say, "I came from God, and am going back to God, and I will have no gaps in the middle of my life." A father carries his child upstairs. Is he going to let his child fall out of his arms? A man casts himself with the trust of a little child into the everlasting arms. Is God going to let him fall out of His arms into chaos and the night? The path of the psalmist's thought leads us to Jesus with his words, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Relationship with God means immortality.[10]

So brutish was I, and ignorant;
I was as a beast before thee.
Nevertheless I am continually with thee:
Thou hast holden my right hand.
Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth;
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.—Psalm 73: 22-26.

Concluding Note

In the Psalms "the innermost soul of the Jewish race is laid bare." Every grief and joy, every doubt and conviction, every fear and hope, known to the heart of the religious Jew, are here. But the Psalms are not alone the self-revelation

[10] The assurance of personal life after death is denied by some writers to the authors of Psalms 16, 49, and 73.

of the soul of a race. To a remarkable degree they are the songs of the eternal religion. Today a religious man reads them, and finds in them the biography of his own soul, discovers the utterance of thoughts which he has cherished, for which he could find no words.

And more than this: when a religious man is told by wise fools that there is no God, when he is informed by self-styled sages that he is but a "Child of a thousand chances, 'neath the indifferent sky," he turns to the Psalms again, thinks of the baffled hopes, the nameless sorrows, the long tragedy of the Jew; and the victorious faith of the Psalmists becomes his, the "solemn confidence" which sings,

> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
> I will fear no evil; for thou art with me . . .
> Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
> And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.
> —Psalm 23:4, 6.

Twenty-sixth Week, Sixth Day.

It has recently been insisted that men, filled with faith in a God who is strong and wise and good, the giver of immortality, become quietists. It has been insisted that these men sit and sing themselves away to everlasting bliss, while millions die for the freedom of the world, and millions are still the slaves of famine and of fear. On the other hand, it can be demonstrated that men with the religion of the psalmists have been the creators, the revolutionists, the discoverers of the world. It is they who share the spirit of Columbus. And our study of their words may not unworthily end with the song sung of him who found the New World:

> "Behind him lay the gray Azores,
> Behind the Gates of Hercules;
> Before him not the ghost of shores,
> Before him only shoreless seas.

The good mate said: 'Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say?'
'Why, say, "Sail on! sail on! and on!"' . . .

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said,
'Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say'—
He said: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
'This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?'
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: 'On! sail on!'"
—Joaquin Miller, "Columbus."

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. On the coming Sabbath observe how many times the Psalms are used in the morning worship of the Church. How do you account for their persistent popularity among us Christians?

2. Do you find that religious ceremonies and "services" help or hinder your religion?

3. Do you think that churchmen are tempted to identify religion with church attendance and "going to meetings"?

4. Have you considered the fact that in Christian churches and in modern Jewish sanctuaries there is no sacrifice? How would you explain this?

5. Compare and contrast the foundations of your faith in the future life with those which seem to have served the psalmists.

6. Do you think that the doctrine of the future life tends to lessen a believer's interest in present social reform?

Twenty-sixth Week, Seventh Day.

Conclusion

The Old Testament is a record of the increasing self-revelation of God. It is also the record of the supreme pre-Christian campaign of faith on behalf of the liberty of men. The forces of man's enslavement have ever been ignorance and injustice, with their cohorts of misery and cruelty, formalism, superstition, and vice. And it has been ours to watch the heroes of faith as they have indeed dared all, borne all, done all, for their people and their God.

"Admire heroes, if thou wilt," says one, "but only admire, and thou remainest a slave. Learn their secret, to commit thyself to God and to obey him, and thou shalt become a hero, too." The long fight for human liberty did not end with the close of the last century before Christ. Jesus did not live and die in vain. Upon him rested the Spirit of the Lord because the Lord anointed him to preach good tidings to the poor, sent him to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Nor did the long fight end with Jesus' death. When on the cross our Master cried, "It is finished," the work of us, his followers, began. Under the leadership of our great Captain Christ, it is ours to join the liberators of the world, fighting ignorance with alert minds and reasoned faith in a living and loving God, in whose companionship is life eternal; fighting injustice

with the justice and the lovingkindness of God. It is ours to lift the artificial burdens from the hearts and the shoulders of men, until at last all men everywhere shall "have a fair chance at all good things," until at last all men everywhere shall stand free, with the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where they lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.—Isa. 35: 5-10.

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